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WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

OR,

THE WILL AND THE WAY.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "WEALTH AND WORTH," &c

"Heaven helps those who help themselves."—*Old Proverb.*

NEW-YORK:

HARPER AND BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF-ST.

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WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

OR,

THE WILL AND THE WAY.

CHAPTER I.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME, BUT SOMETIMES VENTURES ABROAD.

On a dark and chilly evening in the last month of the year, a young portrait-painter named Stanford was sitting alone in the room where he practised his art. An easel was before him, and on it was a painting, although so dim was the light shed by a solitary candle from an adjoining table, that it was difficult to distinguish the figures on the canvass. There was a fireplace in the apartment, but it no longer emitted a cheerful warmth, for the last spark upon the hearth-stone had expired, and the air was growing colder and colder.

The artist seemed to be unconscious of the decay of his fire, for he still sat, with arms folded and eyes fixed, as if absorbed in contemplation. While he is in this position, let us take such a survey of his person as the imperfect light will permit. To judge from his features, he has numbered not far from twenty-sev-

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en years. In stature you would call him neither short nor tall, and in frame neither stout nor thin. His complexion, though not ruddy, is sufficiently indicative of good health, and his face, if not handsome, has that charm of expression which may generally be found in company with serenity of mind and cheerfulness of temper. But hark! he begins to soliloquize, and, with his permission, we will overhear what he has to say.

"I wish I had a thousand dollars! I would go abroad and study my art. I would see the best models—cull from every style its choicest beauties—satisfy myself of the merits of every school —then return and astonish the natives. I do really wish I was not quite so poor. Heigho! What! Mr. Franklin Stanford! do you call yourself poor? What ingratitude! Are you not out of debt? Haven't you good health and good spirits? Have you any one to look out for but yourself? Haven't you a fair field and no favour? What more would you ask, so you have wit enough to shut a door without jamming your fingers, and energy enough to go in when it rains? Surely no young man, unencumbered and free, has a right to call himself poor in this new country, while there are millions upon millions of government acres whither he can go and shoot buffalo and deer for his dinner, sleep on a prairie, and drink out of the Mississippi!"

As the young painter concluded his soliloquy, which, had he imagined it would ever be recorded in print, would undoubtedly have been

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less discursive and free, the City Hall clock struck the hour of midnight.

"Halloo! Twelve o'clock! I had no idea it was so late! I must have been in a brown study," continued Stanford, as he threw on his cloak, and, putting out the light, left the room to wend his way towards his boarding-house.

In the street, he found that a slight snow had fallen since he was last out. The air was humid and uncomfortable, the sidewalks were sloppy, and New-York's great thoroughfare seemed dull, dreary, and deserted. Turning the corner of Vesey-street, Stanford passed the Astor House and hurried up Broadway, eager to seek warmth and repose in his bed. The city was unusually still. Occasionally the figure of a watchman, with his staff under his arm and his hands in his pockets, cowering up against the embrasure of a door, might be distinguished through the mist, but his doze was undisturbed by the rattling of carriages or the exclamations of riotous pedestrians.

Our young painter had not gone farther than Chambers-street, however, when he met a little girl, rather thinly clad, who followed him a step or two, and said, in a low, sweet voice, "Sir! sir! will you listen to me?"

Stanford was naturally humane, but of late he had been so accustomed to the importunities of beggars in Broadway, and so well aware was he that it was one of the tricks of the most experienced of them to send forth their children with slight clothing on inclement nights to excite compassion, that on the present occasion he

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passed on without bestowing any notice upon the little mendicant who had accosted him. She did not renew her appeal, and he had proceeded several rods at a rapid pace, when something like a twinge of pity and regret induced him to look back. The little girl had leaned her head against the iron lamp-post at the corner, and Stanford fancied that he heard her giving way to something like a subdued sob.

What should he do?

"Go home," whispered Selfishness. "You are sleepy and tired. Think of your warm bed. If the child is suffering, let the watchmen take care of her. She is doubtless some impostor. If you are to be stopped in this way by every object of compassion you meet, you may as well abandon every other occupation for that of alms-giver."

"Turn back," said Humanity. "A stray dog should excite your pity on such a night as this. Go and inquire the poor child's story, test its truth, and lend her such aid as your slender means will allow. It is a very convenient excuse to cry out 'imposition,' but let not your heart be blinded by that perfidious plea. Is it not better to be duped than to do an injustice? Be merciful, as you would have mercy at your extremest need."

Here the debate closed, and I am happy to say that Humanity won the cause.

"What ails you, my child?" said Stanford, retracing his steps, and laying his hand on the little girl's shoulder.

She started, and looked up in his face. The

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adjoining lamp shed its rays upon her features. Like dew upon lilies, the tears glistened on her pale cheeks, which looked all the paler from the contrast of her dark eyes and hair. Her frame was slender and small, but straight as an arrow, and symmetrical as an antelope's. A shawl was thrown around her head and held together under her chin, affording little protection against the frigid, penetrating air. She gazed a moment wistfully at Stanford; and then a shudder and a sigh, such as an infant who has sobbed itself asleep sometimes gives vent to, seemed to proceed from the very depths of her heart.

"Poor child! poor child! You are cold," said Stanford, with an emotion of tenderness which made his voice tremulous.

The girl leaned her forehead on his extended arm, and wept with a passionate vehemence, which surprised and agitated him.

He threw a portion of his cloak around her, and said, "Be calm, my child; do not weep so. Tell me what distresses you. Nay, it is late, and we should make the most of our time."

Checking her tears by a strong effort of her will, she said, "Forgive me, sir, but you spoke so kindly!"

"Poor child! poor child!" muttered Stanford, and he drew the cloak closer around her fragile form. "What is your name?"

"Ruth, sir—Ruth Loveday."

"Well, tell me, now, Ruth, what I can do for you. Let me hear your story."

"I came out, sir, to beg a lemon and some sugar to make some lemonade for father."

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"Your father, then, is ill?"

"He is ill, sir, of a fever; so ill, I fear he will—" a sob interrupted the sorrowful conclusion of the little girl's reply; but, after a moment's pause, she continued:

"I went down into that oyster cellar at the corner to get what I wanted, but the man who keeps it drove me away when he found I had no money."

"Well, I have some money, Ruth. Is there nothing besides lemonade your father would like? Does he suffer for want of food?"

"Not now, sir, for his appetite is gone. He has eaten nothing since—"

Again did the little creature's sobs seem to choke her utterance. Stanford had discernment enough to perceive that such wo never could be counterfeited. He gave full credit to her story; and putting his arm, with the cloak over it, around her shoulder, he went with her to the oyster cellar.

Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, there were several young men present engaged in smoking and drinking. One of them staggered up to Stanford, and told him that he must drink with him, or fight. Without noticing this abrupt communication, Stanford purchased the articles which the little girl had come forth to procure, and turned to quit the uncongenial spot. But at this moment the tipsy youth espied the little girl, half hidden by the cloak, and pulled her forth with violence, while he laughed, and declared that she should drink too. Poor Ruth shrank back with alarm, and begged him

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to desist; and Stanford, seeing no other mode of escape, compelled him to let go his hold by knocking him down. Immediately the companions of the prostrate man pressed forward to avenge his fall. Stanford hastily threw off his cloak and handed it, with his bundle, to Ruth, telling her to open the door and keep in advance of him. Ruth promptly obeyed; and her new protector retreated gradually and without injury up the steps till he reached the sidewalk, when he contrived to hit the foremost of his opponents in such a way as to send him back upon the rest, pitching the whole of them down into the cellar.

"Now, Ruth, give me the cloak and bundle; take my other hand, and see how fast you can run."

Turning the corner of Reade-street towards the east, the painter, with his little charge, ran some distance, pursued by the young men, whom strong drink had converted into ruffians. Their shouts and execrations at length aroused a watchman, who interrupted them in their course, and whom they attempted to beat. He sprang his rattle, however, and was soon surrounded by his brethren, who seized and pinioned the rioters, and conveyed them to the watchhouse, from which, in the morning, they would be led before a police-justice, to lament their own imprudence, and shudder at the thought of the mortification of their friends. So much for brandy and water! What fiends and fools does it make of men!

Leading Stanford on from street to street,

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Ruth stopped at last before an old wooden building, which stood in an alley that belonged to that inodorous section of the city known as the Five Points.

"Is this your house, Ruth?"

"We have a room, sir, on the ground floor, but there are several families besides ours in the building."

"So I should think," said Stanford, as the sound of fiddles and of dancing came to his ears from one of the upper stories. He hesitated a moment at the entrance of the abode, as he glanced around at the signs of poverty, uncleanliness, misery, and vice which were externally apparent in the light of a neighbouring street-lamp. But when he looked at Ruth's wan, but earnest and intelligent features, and thought of her forlorn condition, he overcame his repugnance, and told her to lead on. She pushed open the street door, and, passing through a dark entry, followed by her new companion, raised the latch of another door, and said,

"Here is our room, sir. Will you walk in?"

Stanford entered with the little girl, who closed the door gently behind them. Poverty has no need of locks and bolts, no fear of the midnight thief. In one corner of the room was a mattress of straw, on which reposed two sickly-looking children, apparently boys. A tattered screen partially concealed their couch. The opposite corner contained a small trundle bed, which was occupied by a female child, who seemed to be not more than four or five years

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old. A larger bed stood between the windows on another side of the apartment, and there lay the figure of a man. The furniture of the apartment was scanty, old, and poor; and the feeble light that was shed upon it came from a taper that burned in a broken cup on a chair. A rusty, dilapidated stove protruded from the hearth into the centre of the room, but it seemed rather to add to the cheerlessness than to alleviate it, for it contained no fire.

While Stanford was surveying the abode of penury, Ruth hastened to her father's bedside, and, bending over him, kissed his forehead, and told him she had brought with her the materials for making some lemonade.

"No matter now, Ruth," said Mr. Loveday, endeavouring to prop himself up by a pillow, and disclosing to Stanford a face and form emaciated by severe illness. "Give me a sip of water, and then listen to what I have to say."

Ruth obeyed him with looks of solicitude and tenderness, and neither father nor daughter seemed conscious of the presence of a stranger during the conversation that ensued.

"Be composed, Ruth," said the invalid, "when I tell you that my last hour is close at hand. Nay, do not sob so. Hear me. I have never told you the name of your mother's father. He was bitterly opposed to our marriage, for I was poor and of humble extraction. Not even your birth and our straitened circumstances abated his resentment. The more he heard of our indigence, the more did it seem to exasperate him against us. When your mother

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died, and I was visited with that complaint in the eyes which forced me to abandon my business of engraving, I made a last appeal to him in favour of his grandchildren. It was answered with contumely. In the anguish of my heart, I vowed that I would starve with my children rather than apply to him again for aid. But affliction has vanquished pride. The thought of your forlorn condition is too much. You have been all goodness, Ruth. The sight of you must move him, if he be human—give me some more water—nay, first—"

"Dear father, you are exhautsed. Rest a while. There! let me moisten your lips."

The dying man sank back, but immediately made a violent effort to rally his energies.

Raising his hand convulsively, he gasped forth, "Quick! Hear me—his name—address—find in—"

His lips moved, but no sound came from them; and with a sigh, which was his last, his body became motionless in death.

Terrible was little Ruth's wailing when she became assured of the dreadful truth. She wildly kissed the inanimate lips, and wet with hot tears the pale, thin cheeks. So intensely did she seem to suffer—so shaken was her gentle frame by the vehemence of her sorrow, that Stanford, alarmed for her immediate safety, drew near, and by soothing words attempted to withdraw her from the sad spectacle. She repelled him, as if unwilling to be comforted. He placed his hands upon her throbbing brow, and soothingly parted with his fingers her dark

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curls, until, with a slight moan, her head sank upon his arm, and she slept. The tempest of wo had passed. Taking the yielding form of the little sufferer in his arms, he removed to the principal chair in the room, and, drawing his cloak once more around her, watched with tender solicitude her peaceful slumber.

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CHAPTER II.

WAYS AND MEANS.

"WHAT'S to be done?" muttered Stanford to himself, as, three days after these events, he was wending his way towards the miserable lodgings where the young orphans abided. Choosing to bestow the little money he could spare upon the living rather than the dead, he had applied to the proper public authorities for the disposal of Mr. Loveday's mortal remains, which were consigned to the earth at the city's expense.

Ruth had consented passively to everything that Stanford had advised, and, with the exception of a few indications of gratitude towards him for his disinterested kindness, she had remained silent and bowed in grief. The children, after sobbing and rejecting food for a day or more, clustered round their elder sister, and tried a thousand arts to console her. Arthur, who was the elder of the two boys, was a gentle, shy lad, about three years younger than Ruth. Frank was a bold, forward urchin, just entering his seventh year, a little pale for want of healthful food and air, but displaying the elements of a good constitution. May, the youngest of the family, was a gay, sunny little creature, with blue eyes and flaxen hair; in her personal appearance quite a contrast to Ruth.

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Stanford was now approaching the door of the dingy building, where the bereaved children were still staying. He stopped a moment before entering, and again communed with himself: "What's to be done? My funds are getting low, and the abstraction of ten dollars at the present moment would compel me to wear this rusty hat and these old boots two months longer than I intended. The children appear to be quite helpless; and poor little Ruth seems to be wholly confounded when I ask what I shall do for her. I will have one more talk with her, and if we can hit upon no plan for the support of the family, I will apply to some charitable society for aid and advice."

Thus determining, the young painter knocked at the door. It was opened by Ruth, and he was surprised to see her face light up with a smile of welcome almost cheerful as she took his hand and pressed it to her lips.

"Good morning, Ruth; and good morning, little ones," said he, as the children gathered round him, and lifted up their clean faces, beaming with gratitude, and intelligence, and patient affection. Stanford stooped and received their pure kisses upon his cheek; and he thought at the moment that a peal of Fame's longed-for trumpet in his ears, or a sight of Fortune's heaviest prize at his feet, could not have stirred emotions half so sweet and thrilling as those he then felt.

"This is well, my child," said he, turning to her who was now the head of this young family. "I am glad to see that you have struggled with

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your great grief, and are now resigned to the dispensations of Heaven."

"You believe—do you not, sir—that they, my parents, are still living, and that they can look down on us, and see us, and pity us, and be glad in our goodness and happiness still?"

"Yes, Ruth, I hope it—I believe it."

"And I *know* it, sir; I *feel* it, and nothing could persuade me that it is not so. Such happy dreams as I had last night! Do you not think, sir, that the soul may in sleep do much, and think much, and visit many places, which it forgets when we wake?"

"I do not doubt, Ruth, that it may do so, and that it may carry into its waking state good impressions and influences, without knowing there where it received them."

"That is what I meant to say; for, though I lay down to rest last night feeling very sad and desolate, I awoke this morning full of hope, and anxious to go to work immediately. Now what time had my feelings for changing but in sleep?"

"Some deeper philosopher than I must answer your question, my dear. Now let us talk of what directly concerns you. Have you yet found among your father's papers any clew to the name which he was so anxious to communicate in his last moments?"

"Not any, sir. I have searched everywhere—read every scrap of paper that I could find in his trunk, but found nothing that can give even a hint."

"Well, then, we must look upon that resource as cut off, my dear. What's to be done next?

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Have you thought of any plan by which you and the little ones can be provided for?"

Ruth remained silent as if in deep thought, and Stanford continued:

"Believe me, my dear child, had I the means, it would be the joy of my heart to provide for you, and save you from the rough path of daily drudgery and labour; but I have lived upon little else than hope for the last year, and I am almost destitute of money. A little I have still, which you must help me to devote to your own good and that of—"

"Oh, no, sir!" interrupted Ruth. "You have been too liberal, too kind already. Let us not deprive you of what may save you from mortification and want. I will look about instantly, and find something to do. I am quite sure I shall succeed. I can sew, wash, do housework—almost everything."

"I see you bear a brave heart, my child, which is best of all. Would you have me find a place for you as housemaid?"

"That would compel me to part from these little ones. Oh, no! that will never do. Let us keep together—pray let us keep together. And yet, if you think it necessary—"

"How else can you manage to get along?"

Ruth moved her fingers thoughtfully across her forehead, and replied:

"Here is Arthur, who is full of eagerness to help us. I am quite sure he can earn a dollar a week. As for Frank—"

"Frank will make as much as that too," said the boy, who had been listening intently to the

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conversation. "Don't I know how that lummocks, Sam Stuggs, makes his money, and ain't I as good as he?"

"Hush, Frank! Where did you learn such words?" said Ruth, blushing at the urchin's outbreak.

"Learn them? In our alley, to be sure!" replied Frank.

"Do you know how much your father was charged for this apartment?" inquired Stanford.

"Eight dollars a month, in advance," returned Ruth. "A new month will commence the day after to-morrow."

"Indeed! How true it is that the poor have to pay the highest rents! Now hear me, Ruth. For that amount you can procure, in the upper part of the city, two nice rooms. It will not answer for you to stay in these close, filthy, unwholesome quarters, surrounded by such people as occupy other portions of this house. You shall, to-day or to-morrow, go yourself in search of rooms somewhere in a clean, open neighbourhood, where there is a free sweep of fresh air, and where there is not so much encouragement as there is here for the visits of pigs. I will move the little furniture your father has left; supply you with such additional comforts as a few dollars can buy; pay your landlord a month's rent in advance, and leave you to try your talents for housekeeping and getting along."

Ruth's heart was too full to reply to this generous offer by words, but her looks eloquently spoke her gratitude.

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"And now," said Stanford, in continuation, "you shall take your first lesson to-day. You shall search out such apartments as I have recommended, and I will come here early to-morrow morning and learn the result of your inquiries. Be not rebuffed or disquieted should you meet with rude discouragements or derisive interrogations. Your object is a high and sacred one, and, with trust in God, you shall have strength and sagacity beyond your years in accomplishing it."

"You are right, sir—quite right," exclaimed Ruth, with a tone of decision and animation which seemed new to her nature.

"Good-by, then, Ruth; and good-by, May, Arthur, and Frank. What is it, Frank? What big thought is in your brain?"

"By George! I wish I was a man."

"And why so?"

"I'd have a fine house in Broadway, and you should come and live with us."

"Well, Frank, be a good boy, and you will be nearer a man than you think for, young as you are. Aid sister Ruth all you can, and obey her promptly. Once more farewell, my children. Remember, in all your trials, this great truth: Heaven helps those who help themselves. Good-by till to-morrow."

The young painter quitted the house, followed until he was out of sight by the eyes and blessings of the children. Ruth speedily re-entered the room, and prepared for her day's enterprise. Her wardrobe was scanty indeed. An old bonnet of faded pink silk, which had be-

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longed to her mother, was carefully drawn from a bandbox which had long reposed upon the uppermost shelf of the closet. The once bright ribands were removed, and a black silk apron afforded the means of trimming it with the signs of mourning. Another precious relic, being a clean linen cape, was pinned about her neck. A coarse calico gown of a dark hue, and a cloak which had seen more winters than the wearer, completed her equipments. The arrangement upon which Ruth had decided was to leave May at home under the care of Arthur, and to take Frank along with herself.

It was no easy matter to dispose Frank's habiliments so as to prevent his wearing the appearance of a young desperado, who had been fighting until every square inch of cloth upon his limbs was in tatters. His shoes looked as if he had been amusing himself for the last few days with kicking against a rough stone-wall. His hat, it cannot be denied, was a shocking bad one, and yet there was a knowing twist in the manner in which it was set upon his head, that gave it a character altogether its own. To tell the truth about that hat, it had belonged, in years past, to his father. Frank, on inheriting it, exerted his powers of invention for its improvement. He began by cutting it in two in the middle, and slipping down the crown several inches nearer to the rim; then, finding the circumference too large for his head, he cut out a strip from the side, and sewed up the aperture, thus contracting its dimensions.

As the hat had originally been bell-shaped,

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these reformations gave to it a singularly original appearance; and this characteristic was increased in the course of a few months by Frank's peculiar fashion of jamming it on his head, so that, at the period of which I am writing, there was something so very striking in its aspect, that Ruth looked at it with real dismay, and apprehended, not without reason, that it would attract attention even in the crowded thoroughfares, where strange sights and strange people were no novelty. After many attempts to press it into a shape less startling and monstrous, she abandoned the task as hopeless; and taking the wearer's hand, and bidding May and Arthur to be of good cheer till her return, she went forth with Frank on her important errand.

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CHAPTER III.

A HUNT FOR LODGINGS.

A KNIGHT-ERRANT of old going forth for the first time in quest of adventure—a naval commander putting out to sea with his fleet—could hardly have experienced a weightier sense of anxiety and responsibility than did our little friend Ruth, as, tightly clasping Frank by the hand, she proceeded with him up Broadway to a less crowded part of the city in search of lodgings. Naturally shy and sensitive, it was only by a strong effort that she had sufficiently overcome her timid misgivings to undertake her present mission.

It was a clear, cheery day, bright and sunny, though the air was keen. Nothing memorable befell our young adventurers until, as they were crossing Canal-street, an urchin, who had been following them for some distance, gazing with intense excitement at Frank's prodigy of a hat, suddenly came up to him and exclaimed,

"I say, Blue Jacket, where did you get so much hat?"

In an instant Frank's hand was withdrawn from his sister's, and he was in pursuit of the impertinent inquirer, who, though considerably the larger, took refuge from the wrath he had provoked by jumping on the step of an omnibus.

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from which he securely made faces at Frank, going through some peculiar gyrations with his hands applied to his nose, and then giving a specimen of the Ethiopian double-shuffle with his feet.

Frank returned indignant, and allowed Ruth to reclaim his hand, when she asked,

"Why will you be so hasty, Frank?"

"By George! if I had caught him, wouldn't I have pitched into him?" replied Frank, doubling his fist, and aiming a blow at the air.

As he uttered this bravado, he felt a sudden knock on the top of his head, and was all at once enveloped in total darkness, while it was with difficulty that he could breathe. Another boy, intent on mischief, had stolen up behind him, and jammed the unfortunate hat down over his face.

Before Frank could recover his sight, the annoyer had fled, and Ruth was exerting herself to pacify the little victim. With some difficulty she appeased him. They walked on, and fortunately met with no farther molestation of the kind.

Turning off towards the eastern part of the city, the young pedestrians at length entered a street beyond the Bowery, where the houses, though apparently occupied by poor people, were for the most part neither crowded nor dirty. Here Ruth stopped for a few minutes and reconnoitred. Seeing a grocery shop, she resolved to stop there and make inquiries. There was nothing extraordinary about the shop, unless it was its neatness. A bundle of

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new brooms hung before the window, under which was a shelf, on which were arranged goodly specimens of clean brown sugar, dried beans, raisins, almonds, figs, oranges, prunes, coffee, and various articles of a more substantial nature. At the door stood a fat man with a red face, with his thumbs resting in the armholes of his waistcoat. He seemed to be contemplating, with a meditative sort of interest, not unmingled with amusement, a contest which was taking place in the street between a little black pig and a large dog. The pig, after submitting to a degree of annoyance, such as few pigs could have endured with equal resignation and fortitude, suddenly, with a desperate squeal, ran at its antagonist, and chased him from the field. Hereat the fat man began to heave and shake with laughter, which did not abate until his eyes fell on Ruth and Frank, whom he saluted with a jolly wink, which seemed to say, "Wasn't that fun, young ones?"

Encouraged by these indications, Ruth advanced with the purpose of addressing him, but as she came near, a female appeared just in his rear, whose figure and aspect formed a remarkable contrast to his own. Her complexion was sallow, and her cheeks thin and sunken. Her lips seemed glued together, so tightly were they habitually compressed. Her figure was straight and attenuated, and in her movements she was brisk and rigid. This individual was Mrs. Bibb. The fat man was Mrs. Bibb's husband, and, nominally, the keeper of the grocery shop.

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The approach of Mrs. Bibb seemed to produce a singular effect upon her liege lord. The comical wink, which had so lit up his face, and encouraged Ruth to come forward, was changed into an equally comical frown, as, in deep, guttural tones, he exclaimed, "Go away from here, children; what are you hanging about here for?"

With a longing, lingering look behind at the raisins and almonds, Frank took his sister's hand, and turned with her away. Mrs. Bibb cast an approving glance upon Mr. Bibb, and, well satisfied with the exhibition of rigour he had given, went back into an inner room. No sooner had she disappeared, than the attention of the children was arrested by a voice calling to them in a husky whisper, "I say, children, come back! Bob, you rogue, look here! Come back, will you?"

Looking round, the young adventurers saw the fat man, with a couple of oranges in his hand, beckoning them to return. They obeyed, whereupon the fat man again winked, and began:

"I say, Bob—"

"But my name isn't Bob; it is Frank, sir—Frank Loveday," said the boy.

"Well, I was sure it was either Frank or Bob—Bob or Frank—it is all the same, you know, in Greek," replied the fat man, with another wink.

"I don't know it at all," said Frank, stoutly, "for I never studied Greek."

"I am sorry for it," returned the fat man,

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gravely; "for, then, how will you be able to suck this orange?" And here a perfect volley of winks was poured in upon poor Frank, succeeding one another rapidly like flashes of heat-lightning.

Childhood,

"That best detector of a gentle heart,"

is quick to find out its friends, and Frank was not slow in returning Mr. Bibb's amicable overtures. He even went so far as to return him his winks, at which the grocer was wonderfully delighted, regarding him as a lad of marvellous promise. The oranges were immediately surrendered to him, and Mr. Bibb seemed still farther rejoiced when he saw Frank choose the bigger one and insist on giving it to Ruth.

"Where do you live, and where are you going, young ones?" inquired Mr. Bibb.

"I am now in search of lodgings, sir," replied Ruth, "and I wished to ask you if you knew of any to let in this neighbourhood?"

"But why did your mother send you out to look for lodgings? Why didn't she come herself?"

"My mother, sir, is dead," answered Ruth, casting down her eyes.

Mr. Bibb was silent for a moment, and then said, in a softened tone, "I am very sorry for that, my dear. And your father is too busy, I suppose, to go about room-hunting, so he sent you; is that it, eh?"

"My father died last week, sir," replied Ruth, struggling to keep down her tears.

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Mr. Bibb caught his breath suddenly, and then, puffing out his cheeks, looked about fiercely, with the evident determination that he would not be caught blubbering by his better half.

"Poor—poor children!" said he, at last, with a sigh. "And how many of you are there?"

"Four, sir, including myself," answered Ruth.

"And have you no relative, no friend to take care of you, and tell you what to do?"

"Oh, yes, sir, we have a very good, generous friend, Mr. Stanford. He will pay the first month's rent of our rooms."

"Well, let me see if I can think of a nice place for you somewhere in this neighbourhood; for you know you can give me your custom if you take lodgings hereabout, and—"

"Yes, and fine, profitable custom it will be, Mr. Bibb!" exclaimed a shrill, piercing voice, which seemed to produce the same effect upon the fat man that might have been occasioned by an acute twinge of a jumping toothache. "Nice custom, to be sure! Shame upon you, sir! Can't a couple of ragged brats pass the door without your pampering them with oranges? Away from here, you little, good-for-nothing vagrants! If you show your faces here again, I will rub them in the sand-barrel, I will! Off with you! Tramp! And you, sir, how dare you, after your promise to me—"

The rest of Mrs. Bibb's objurgation was lost to Ruth and Frank, who hastily quitted the spot. They had to walk some distance, however, before they wholly escaped the noise of her tones.

"By George! if my wife spoke so to me,

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wouldn't I give her the strap!" exclaimed Frank, as soon as a few blocks of houses were placed between him and the formidable Mrs. Bibb.

"Do not talk so, Frank. You must keep down that quarrelsome temper of yours, or it will lead you into trouble."

"I can't bear to be imposed upon, or to see anybody else imposed upon."

"You are too forward, Frank—too rebellious for such a little boy. You should forgive those that harm you—be mild to those that are rude."

"If a boy knocks off my hat, and kicks it, what shall I do?"

Ruth gave a reluctant glance at the enormous hat, and shuddered as she admitted the probability of such buffets occurring to poor Frank. She was a little puzzled by his straightforward, practical question, and, at the moment, seeing a bill, on which was inscribed "Rooms to Let," attached to a neighbouring house, she proposed that they should call, in pursuance of the object of their errand.

In answer to Frank's knock, the door was opened by a middle-aged woman, with an infant crying in her arms, and two riotous children tugging at her gown.

"I would like to see the rooms you have to let, and learn the price," said Ruth, modestly.

"Who wants to hire them?" asked the woman, putting away the hands of the struggling infant from the ribands of her cap.

"I myself, ma'am," replied Ruth.

"You! Why you are but a child!" exclaimed the woman.

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"You shall receive a month's pay in advance if I like the rooms," returned Ruth.

"Well, I never!" said the woman, with a wondering stare. "But come in and warm yourselves, children. Cease pulling at my gown, Andrew Jackson! Amos Kendall, if you do that again, I will give you such a box on the ear as will make you see stars! Let go, will you? Rebecca Ann, when will you be done squalling? Be still, you cross little thing, you! Come in, my dear, and shut the door. So, you can pay a month's rent in advance?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Ruth, following, with Frank, the matron and her interesting offspring into a small room, half kitchen and half nursery, about which every nameable utensil of domestic use was cluttered.

"Sit down, dear," said Mrs. Crane, for such was the woman's name.

Ruth was about to take a chair, when Andrew Jackson, who had apparently been absorbed for some moments in the contrivance of a piece of mischief, pulled it from under her, and she would have fallen had she not caught at Frank's arm. Mrs. Crane immediately put down Rebecca Ann upon the floor, and darting at the namesake of the hero of New-Orleans, hit him a blow which sent him spinning against the wall. Such a yell as he set up was never heard even from an Indian ambush. It was immediately echoed by Amos, and finally swelled by the voice of Rebecca Ann, until the chorus was perfect. In despair, Mrs. Crane rushed to the sugar-bowl, and liberally distributed its contents among the clamorous trio.

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Comparative tranquillity being restored by this sweetening process, Ruth went with her conductor to examine the rooms. She decided at once that they would not do. They were low, badly ventilated, dirty, and looked out upon a close yard, into which well-educated pigs would have disdained to enter. The Cranes were evidently an uncleanly family, and with such Ruth hoped to avoid forming an alliance.

As she returned to the sitting-room with Frank, the sounds of another disturbance struck their ears.

"Ma! Andrew has got my sugar!" screeched the younger of the boys.

"Oh dear! Oh—h—h—h—yah—ooh—hullabaloo!" yelled Andrew Jackson.

Before the perplexed mother could part the combatants, Amos had seized Andrew by the hair of his head, at which he was pulling with all his strength. The tables were soon turned, however, for Andrew succeeded in getting one of Amos's fingers between his teeth, and it now was Amos who yelled. It was some time before poor Mrs. Crane could make the hero of New-Orleans relax his bite, and put an end to the fraternal strife.

"Was ever mother so pestered by her children!" she exclaimed.

Ruth did not reply, but could not help thinking that the mother was merely reaping the consequences of her own faulty mode of bringing the children up.

Bidding farewell to Mrs. Crane and her progeny, the brother and sister proceeded on their errand.

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"I tell you what, Ruth," began Frank, as they emerged into the fresh air, "I should like to have the trouncing of those two fellows, Andrew and Amos. One of them was going to stick a pin into me; but when he saw my fist he grew shy. Are they not nice boys?"

"Take warning by their example, Frank, and avoid quarrels. I wish you were not so ready on all occasions to double up your fist."

"You wouldn't have me stand still, and let a fellow run pins into me, would you?"

"No; but try gentle means before you try blows."

"Oh, Ruth, you are a girl, and don't understand some things," said Frank, cocking his stupendous hat upon one side of his head, with the air of a man who is disposed to drop a tiresome topic of conversation.

The next house at which they stopped was one occupied by a Mr. Grimby, who testily sent them away, saying that he could not be pestered by children. Not at all disheartened, Ruth renewed her inquiries at a neighbouring door; but here the price demanded for rooms was altogether too high. She now inquired at nearly a dozen places successively. At times her application was disregarded or laughed at; and, on one occasion, a woman charged her with making her inquiry a pretence for finding an opportunity to steal something. This accusation roused all the ire of Frank's nature, and he told the woman that she spoke falsely.

"Hoity toity!" exclaimed she; "if you crow again, I will cut your comb."

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"You are a bad woman," returned Frank.

"Come away," said Ruth.

"Be off!" continued the woman, attempting to lay her hand on Ruth's shoulder to push her; but Frank interposed, and tightly withheld the extended arm. "Oh, you little tiger! let me alone, or I will call Mr. Hyde," said the termagant, who, like most tyrannical people, was a great coward.

"Strike me, but don't lay a finger on my sister!" returned Frank; and, releasing the woman's arm, he followed Ruth into the street.

It was now waxing late in the afternoon, and the little orphans began to fear that they would have to return home unsuccessful. After passing from street to street, they suddenly found themselves once more approaching the grocery store where they had had the adventure with the fat man. At the distance of a square from this place, Ruth noticed a high brick house standing by itself. It was old and poor in its appearance, but the sidewalk before the door was well swept, and at the front windows were a couple of flower-pots, in one of which was a monthly rosebush, and in the other a geranium-plant.

"I think they must be good people who live here, Frank," said Ruth. "We will call."

Her light tap at the door was answered by a little blue-eyed girl, hardly tall enough to reach the latch, who smiled and courtesied as she returned the glance of the young strangers.

"Who lives here, my dear?" asked Ruth.

"Aunt Sarah, or, I should say, Mrs. Bangs," replied the child.

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"And what is your name, pretty one?" rejoined Ruth.

"Lucy Marvell," answered the little girl, looking up confidingly in Ruth's face.

"I would like to see your aunt a few moments."

"She is in the kitchen, ironing. Will you walk in?"

Ruth and Frank followed their guide until they found themselves in the presence of a woman who seemed about thirty years old, and who was busily engaged in ironing shirts and fine pieces of linen. She was coarsely but neatly dressed, with a plain muslin cap on her head, and a kerchief white as newly-fallen snow about her neck. Her countenance bore the marks of labour and anxiety, but whenever she spoke, it lighted up with a cheerful smile. Two small children sat looking at a picture-book upon a little bench which stood on the wide brick hearth. They had their hands on each other's shoulder, and the larger seemed to be teaching the smaller one to read. Opposite to these sat an old blind woman in an armchair, who was slowly knitting upon a stocking. A sleek gray cat lay lazily purring at her feet before the fire. Everything about the room seemed cleanly and in its place. Even the wide, whitely-spread ironing-board bore an air of comfort.

Ruth modestly explained to Mrs. Bangs the object of her visit; and the good woman's face betrayed no slight emotion of surprise when

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she learned her story, and her plans for the future.

As soon as Ruth had communicated all the information she thought proper, Mrs. Bangs briefly explained to her the condition of her own household. The family consisted of herself and husband, his blind mother, eight children, and the little girl, Lucy Marvell, who had opened the door. Of the children, the eldest boy, Calvin, who had been apprenticed to a carpenter, had, a few months before, fallen from a staging and been crippled. He occupied a room on the third story, to which he was still confined by illness. William Bangs, or, as he was more generally known among his companions, Bill Bangs, was the next son, and on him devolved the laborious duty of collecting and depositing the clothes which his mother washed. The office was no sinecure. Mary, the eldest girl, was about Ruth's age, and had quite enough to keep her employed in taking care of the smaller children, the youngest of whom numbered hardly two years. All that Ruth could learn at the moment about Mr. Bangs was, that he was a coachman; but the sigh which escaped the blind old lady as his name was mentioned, led the little visiter to fear that there was something wrong about this important member of the family.

There was yet another inmate of the house, but he bore the relation of a lodger towards the rest. This was a French gentleman, who was known in the neighbourhood as the *Mounseer*, but whose genuine name was Mallet. His sole

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articles of furniture were a cot bedstead, a wash-basin, a broken chair, a broken mirror, a violin case, which was not empty, and an excellent pianoforte. The frugal means on which he lived were obtained by playing on the violin in the orchestra of one of the minor theatres. His time during the day was devoted principally to musical composition. He was always engaged upon some new opera or oratorio, or some incomprehensible fantasias, arias, and concertos. The music publishers would refuse even to examine his manuscripts; the theatres would reject his operas; and the harmonic societies would laugh at the idea of attempting one of his oratorios; but, notwithstanding all these failures and disappointments, where could you find a lighter or more benignant heart than that which beat beneath the rough, uncouth exterior of the "Mounseer?" "*Vive la bagatelle!*" he would exclaim, after one of these rebuffs; "*it is the vorld's loss—le pauvre monde!*"

As soon as she had communicated some of these particulars to Ruth, Mrs. Bangs informed her that there were two rooms in the garret, one of which had a fireplace and a closet; and that she could let them unfurnished for eight dollars a month. Ruth's heart leaped at this piece of intelligence, and she was nigh engaging the apartments without looking at them. This inadvertent haste Mrs. Bangs prevented by offering to show them to her; and they consequently proceeded up four flights of stairs to the attic.

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"Oh! these will do nicely—nicely, Mrs. Bangs," exclaimed Ruth, as she glanced out of a window, and caught a refreshing glimpse of the East River. "How clean and airy they will be, and how easily ventilated! We will take them to-morrow, Mrs. Bangs."

"With one understanding, I will trust you, my dear," said Mrs. Bangs. "We are poor people here—very poor; and, since my boy's illness, and the falling-off in Mr. Bangs's business, I find it very difficult to make both ends meet. Do you think you will be able to pay me the rent promptly in advance on the first of every month?"

Ruth drooped her head a moment, and then, looking up frankly, replied, "The first month's rent I can surely pay when I take the rooms, and I do believe that I shall be able to get along so as to pay you promptly afterward."

"You look and speak like a good girl," said Mrs. Bangs, "and I am not afraid to trust you. You can take the rooms."

"Oh, thank you—thank you, ma'am!" replied Ruth. "I am sure we shall get along nicely. But hark! Don't I hear music? And it comes from the room below. How very sweet! I love music."

"That is the Mounseer playing on the piano."

"The what, ma'am?" inquired Ruth.

"The old Frenchman of whom I told you just now."

"Oh, yes, I remember. And will he let us hear him play?"

"I do not see how he can well help it; but

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even if he could he would not, for he loves to have listeners."

"Then I am sure he will love me, for I could listen all day," said Ruth. "But come, Frank, it is getting late. We will move into the rooms to-morrow, Mrs. Bangs."

"Very well, dear; I shall expect you. This is the way down stairs, and there is Lucy waiting for another kiss from you at the door."

Bidding the good woman a cheerful good-by, and giving Lucy the expected kiss, Ruth took her brother's hand and quitted the house.

So, at length, the momentous mission was fulfilled—and how successfully! How happy Ruth felt at the issue of her day's wanderings and inquiries! For some minutes she and Frank walked on in silence. But soon, in retracing their steps by one of the squares they had before traversed, the latter exclaimed, "I say, Ruth, look there!"

Ruth looked in the direction pointed out, and saw the fat man, who had given them the oranges in the morning, standing at the door of his shop. His face no longer wore the joyous expression which seemed congenial to it. He stood with eyes fixed upon the ground, apparently in a thoughtful and disconsolate mood. Occasionally he would shake his head, as if he were saying to himself, "It is too bad! I'll not submit to it any longer." Then he would smooth his chin, as if he were half afraid of the rebellious thoughts that had arisen in his mind, and was trying to keep them down.

Frank dropped his sister's hand, and, with an

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impulse half of sympathy and half of mischief, went up and plucked the fat man by the skirt of the coat, and, catching his glance, commenced a most animated series of winks.

"What, my little hero! is it you?" exclaimed Mr. Bibb, at once relaxing from his grave mood. "And here is sister, too! Well, my dear, have you succeeded in getting rooms?"

Ruth informed him of the happy termination of their search, whereat Mr. Bibb seemed greatly rejoiced, especially when he learned that they were to live at Mrs. Bangs's, whom he knew and liked, and whose house was at no great distance from his own.

Looking cautiously round, Mr. Bibb's hand moved stealthily towards a box of almonds, and grasped a goodly quantity, which he was about to transfer to Frank's hat, when the same shrill, dissonant voice, which had before saluted him after one of his benevolent donations, struck upon his ear, and seemed to paralyze him in the act. The almonds dropped from his grasp, and were scattered on the floor; his teeth chattered, and his rubicund visage lost its jolly hue.

"I thank you as much as if I had them," said Frank, shaking him by his hand, which had dropped powerless by his side.

"Good-by, sir," added Ruth; but the fat man was as silent as if suffering under an apoplectic attack.

Passing into the Bowery, where the lamplighters were just commencing their nightly task, the children hurried towards their home, which they reached without any farther adven-

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ture. They found Arthur and May quite well, though a little concerned at their prolonged absence. Arthur had been reading all the old books he could find, and May had been busying herself with her needle. Some food and milk had been sent by Stanford. Ruth placed them upon the plain pine table at which they were accustomed to eat, and prepared their day's meal.

"I am hungry as a bear," said Frank.

"How good, how thoughtful of Mr. Stanford, to send all these things!" exclaimed Ruth, with a tear of gratitude in her eye.

"We shall dine at a fashionable hour," said Arthur. "Shall I not light the candle, sister?"

Ruth answered in the affirmative, and with some kind, encouraging words to every one, distributed the food and the milk. After a cheerful repast, she heard the children say their prayers, one after another, and saw them comfortably asleep. Then, calling down a benediction upon the friend who had assisted her, and commending him, and herself, and those under her charge to the vigilance of an all-gracious Father, she sank into a sweet and tranquil repose.

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CHAPTER IV.

A GOOD MOVE.

WHAT dungeon so damp and dreary—what chamber so mean and miserable, that a beam of the crimson sunlight of morning cannot gladden? Alas for the heart which the blessed influence cannot cheer and revive! Alas for the eye which does not kindle with responsive joy at the flushed cheek of a newborn day!

The fatigues of her late errand had so deepened and sweetened Ruth's sleep, that when she opened her eyes she started to see that it was some time after sunrise. Immediately rising from her pillow, she found that the children were still reposing, with the exception of Arthur, who was dressing behind the screen. After washing, she followed his example, and was soon accoutred. The children were then called.

"Yaw—aw—aw—whoo!" yawned Frank, as he threw off the bedclothes. "I say, Arthur, do you know I have been sleeping at the rate of ten knots an hour? I was afraid of foundering at one time, I got so deep."

"Get up, Frank! We have another good day's work before us," said Ruth.

"I am your man, then," replied Frank, doing as he was bidden.

As soon as all were ready, an early and fru-

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gal breakfast was despatched, and the table cleared away. Under the active superintendence of Ruth, the humble household articles—the sole legacy of Mr. Loveday—were then securely packed for removal; the bed was taken down, and the mattresses rolled up. Some ten minutes after this was accomplished, the familiar knock of Mr. Stanford was heard at the door, which was eagerly opened by Ruth. As he entered, he looked around with evident astonishment, and exclaimed, "Bravo, my little housekeeper! This is admirable! You have begun nobly, my dear." Saying this, Stanford stooped, and enforced his expression of satisfaction by kissing her forehead. Why did Ruth shrink and blush as he did so? It would have puzzled her to tell, had she asked herself the question.

A carman was speedily engaged, and preparations made for immediate removal. The collected property of the orphans hardly formed a cart-load. As Frank sagaciously observed, however, had it been greater, greater would have been the trouble of transporting it.

With the youthful family, there were very few pleasant ties to be sundered in parting from their old room; and yet Ruth, as she bade it farewell, could not forbear heaving a sigh or two. There she had suffered penury and pain, bereavement and affliction; but there, also, had the finest sympathies of her nature, the tenderest impulses of her heart, been developed and tried. There a parent had breathed his last; and, dark and squalid as it seemed, was it not then, and would it not be henceforth, to her a hallowed spot?

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Stanford parted with the children at the door, and, placing ten one-dollar bills in the hands of Ruth, promised to visit their new abode in the afternoon, and hurried away. Ruth stood gazing after him till he was out of sight, nor did she move till she was startled by Frank's calling out, "Ruth! Ruth! will you never come along? The old house will tumble on you if you stand there much longer. The carman, and Arthur, and May have already turned the corner. Come along!"

As Frank was clamouring in this manner, a big boy who was passing turned and said, "Look here, Baretoes, you will be taken up if you walk through Broadway with that hat on. Don't you know there's a law against frightening horses?"

"Well, I advise you not to get in the way of the dog-killers," retorted Frank.

"None of your slack!" said the big boy, angrily, advancing and drawing back his fist.

"Come on!" replied Frank, buttoning his jacket, and giving a very belligerent slant to his terrible hat.

Whether it was that the big boy was frightened by the hat or by Frank's show of resistance, I have not been able satisfactorily to determine. That he slunk away, however, with an impotent shake of the head, is a fact which does not admit of dispute.

It was after noonday before the migrating party reached Mrs. Bangs's house in Craven-street. On entering, the first sound that Ruth heard was the voice of a man raised to an an-

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gry pitch, and uttering the most violent oaths. In the kitchen stood Mrs. Bangs, her bare elbow leaning on a wash-tub, and her face flushed at once by fatigue and weeping. A coarse, dissipated-looking man, clothed in a white, shaggy overcoat, with a yellow oil-skin hat on his head, was shaking his fist at her and swearing. He was evidently intoxicated, and Ruth rightly inferred at once that he was no other than Mr. Bangs.

"Hand me over five dollars, or I'll drown you in your own wash-tub, Mrs. Soapsuds," said he, with a ferocious imprecation.

"Indeed, indeed, husband, I have given you all I have, even the money I had put aside to buy some opodeldoc for poor Calvin."

"Sink the opo—opo—dildoc!" muttered the drunkard, with a maudlin hiccough. "I want money, and money I will have, or you shall dance for it: so no more of your nonsense."

At this moment Ruth and the children made their appearance, and Bangs, vibrating to and fro, glancing first at his wife and then at them, exclaimed, "Well, what do these brats want here?"

"I have let the rooms in the garret to them, my dear," replied Mrs. Bangs. "I hope you will not object."

"That depends upon circumstances, Mrs. Bangs," replied he, with a drunken chuckle. "Do they pay down in advance, and no mistake?"

"Oh, yes, sir," exclaimed Ruth, who began to be alarmed at the prospect of the failure of

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her negotiation; "I have the first month's rent tied up here in my handkerchief."

"Then untie it, my darling, and fork out. You shall have the rooms!" said Bangs, whom the anticipation of receiving the money had restored to good humour.

Ruth feared she had been a little hasty, and looked sorrowfully at Mrs. Bangs; but the latter, with a sigh of resignation, told her to pay the rent into her husband's hands. Ruth complied, and counted out eight dollars, which Mr. Bangs, after gloating over them for a moment, safely stowed away in his waistcoat pocket, and then tightly buttoned up his overcoat.

"Will you not leave me a dollar for Calvin?" asked the unhappy wife. "He is in a good deal of pain to-day—indeed he is."

"Don't be unreasonable, my dear," replied the husband, in a tone of ironical tenderness. "I have got to go to Hoboken upon very important business, and shall want all the money I can raise."

Fy upon you, Bangs! The "important business" on which you were going was to witness a pugilistic encounter between "English Bob and Yankee Tom," and you wanted the money to bet with!

As soon as the drunken man had quitted the house, Ruth untied another corner of her handkerchief, took from it one of two dollar bills, looked at it wistfully a moment as she thought of her own slender means, and then going to Mrs. Bangs, who had sunk into a chair and covered her face with her hands, she removed one

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of them gently, and pressed into it the money. As soon as the abused wife was conscious of the act, she looked up at Ruth with an expression of surprise, and for a moment it seemed as if her wits were wandering. But then her breast began to heave, and with a convulsive sob she threw her arms about the girl's neck, and wept audibly. It was some minutes before the sufferer could recover her voice, so choked was it with emotion. At last she said, "I thank you, my dear—thank you for the loan, but still more for these tears; for I feared—that I should never weep again."

The carman who had brought Ruth's movables chanced to be honest and obliging. He cheerfully assisted in carrying them up stairs into the attic apartments which were now to be a home to the young Lovedays. Ruth was thankful to find that Mrs. Bangs had, the night before, thoroughly washed the floors, which seemed clean enough now to be spread with damask without tarnishing it. The windows were open, and a fine, fresh draught was pouring through.

There were so many hands ready to help, that the bed for Ruth and May, and the mattresses for the boys, were soon properly bestowed. It did not take long to arrange the furniture, if by that name we may dignify the four or five old, dilapidated chairs, a pine table, a tin wash-basin, a trunk containing papers, knives and forks, cups and saucers, plates and spoons, a small desk that had belonged to Mr. Loveday, a skillet and an iron pot, two and-

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irons and a flat-iron, a large wooden tub, a pail, a shovel, and, to conclude, a bandbox and a small square chest, holding all the articles of clothing belonging to the orphans. These, with a few blankets and sheets, and the clothes they wore, constituted their whole property.

The room exposed to the south was chosen for the girls' chamber. It must also serve for parlour and kitchen. A small closet which adjoined was made the receptacle of the utensils for cooking and washing. As the weather grew cold towards evening, Mrs. Bangs lent Ruth some wood to make a fire, and a cheerful blaze was soon throwing up a flickering reflection upon the walls.

"This is a plaguy sight more comfortable than the old place," said Frank, rubbing his hands. "I can see all the steamboats and ships that pass up the East River from my chamber window. Isn't it first rate, Arthur?"

A knock at the door interrupted the reply, and Stanford entered.

"Well done again, my children!" exclaimed he, as he received all their welcoming hands into his. "These rooms are just the thing for you, Ruth. You could not have chosen better. Now let me look around, and see what more is wanted to make you comfortable."

"You have done far more for us already, Mr. Stanford, than charity could ask. Believe me, we want nothing more at present."

"Let me be the judge of that, my dear," said Stanford, taking out pencil and paper, and noting down the articles named. "In the first

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place, you must have some wood; then candles; two wash-benches, and some crash towels and soap; two large pails; four basins; tooth-brushes; a broom and mop; lastly, some ship-biscuit, potatoes, salt beef, and salt."

The mention of the tooth-brushes produced manifest surprise. Stanford noticed it, and, after completing his list, said, "Upon you, Ruth, I need not impress the necessity of personal cleanliness, for you are naturally neat; but you may not know how intimately associated it is with moral and physical health. There can be no high breeding without it, nor any low breeding with it. Poverty, while it clings to this virtue—and, whatever may be said, it is a virtue which even Poverty may practise—is more desirable and respectable than rank and wealth without it. Regard cleanliness, therefore, as a sacred duty imposed on you by the laws of your nature and of morality, and which, if neglected, must result in moral or bodily disease."

"We will all most surely follow your advice, Mr. Stanford," said Ruth.

"Then let my directions for one day answer for all," continued Stanford. "The articles I have named shall be sent to you this evening. Before going to bed, the boys shall fill the two pails with fresh water, and leave one by the bench in your room, and the other by that in their own room. Wear no single article of clothing at night that you have worn during the day. Nothing can be more noisome and unwholesome than the custom. As your means will al-

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low, have fresh under-garments for every morning. Rise early, and lave, not merely your face and neck, but the entire surface of your body, commencing with the head, and ending with the feet. Then rub yourself dry. The habit will soon get to be a luxury, even in the coldest weather, and you will be disposed to go rather without your breakfast than your bath. After washing the external surface, wash the interior by cleansing the teeth, and taking a good draught of fresh, cold water. Then throw open the windows of both rooms, so that there may be a current of air through, and give the bed-clothes a thorough airing for an hour or more, at such intervals as may be convenient. Learn that there is a morality of the body as well as of the soul, and that the one cannot exist without the other, so long as the mortal alliance continues."

Ruth silently drank in every word which Stanford uttered, as if it were a distinct oracle; and, seeing her attention so earnestly fixed, he continued:

"Should the boys come home with cold or wet feet, take care that they dip them into cold water till the glow is restored, instead of keeping on their shoes and stockings. Should they be feverish, let the bath be warm. Will you remember all these rules?"

"Shall I repeat them to you?" asked Ruth. "I have them by heart."

"I will trust to your recollection, my dear. Obey them, and see that they are obeyed by those who look up to you for guidance, and

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you will escape, with the blessing of Heaven, a thousand ills which beset, not merely the poor and ignorant, but the rich and luxurious. All diseases are the consequence of the infringement of some physical law, either by ourselves or our ancestors, as all vices are the result of breaking a moral law."

"You haven't told us anything yet, Mr. Stanford, about eating," said Arthur.

"Well thought of, Arthur!" resumed Stanford. "I need hardly caution you against intemperance either in eating or drinking; for gluttony is the offspring of laziness, and I am sure you will avoid *that* sin; but were you ever so rich, I would say, let your food be simple and pure; shun spices of all kinds; choose no meat unless it is fresh or properly salted; drink tea rather than coffee, but, if you cannot get the tea, content yourself with the persuasion that pure water is all the better for you; finally, in the words of an old philosopher, 'eat to live, and do not live to eat.'"

"I'll never make such a beast of myself as to get drunk, anyhow," said Frank, "after what I saw to-day."

He then told the story of Mr. Bangs's conduct, and in the course of it the fact of Ruth's parting with one of her last two dollars came out.

She looked at Stanford, half fearing that she had been improvident; but she was reassured as a smile of gratification passed over his face. He mused in silence for a moment, and the thought which occupied his mind was this:

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"How many more calls do the poor, living among the poor, have upon their sympathy and charity than the rich, who may live in their fine houses for years without witnessing a single instance of domestic misery and destitution! It is quite apparent that the humble and needy give away far more in proportion to their means than the affluent; and there is a reason why it should so be; for to the former, scenes of distress and penury are brought directly home, with a powerful appeal to their feelings, while the latter see them only through the rose-coloured veils of fiction, or avoid them altogether as a disagreeable subject."

"And now, Ruth," said Stanford, starting from his revery, and taking her by the hand, "I have a piece of news to tell you which I fear will make you sad. A gentleman who is about to sail for Europe has offered to pay my expenses if I will accompany him, and remunerate him by copying certain Italian paintings. The offer is so advantageous that I cannot hesitate to accept it; in fact, I have made arrangements to leave the country in a packet-ship tomorrow."

Poor Ruth! She had grown paler and paler as Stanford proceeded in his communication, and, as the last word fell upon her ear, she fainted.

Stanford took her gently in his arms, and dipping his fingers in cold water, touched her forehead and lips, and breathed into her nostrils and mouth. In a few minutes she was restored; and, smiling feebly, she said, "I have

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given you much trouble, sir, but, believe me, I am grateful."

"Be not too much concerned at my departure, my child. I shall be able to give you a little more assistance, and—"

"Ah, no! it is not that—it is not that!"

"God will raise up new friends to provide for you."

"I know he will: it is not that!"

"Should you be in want—"

"He feeds the sparrows, and I am sure he will give us food. I have no fear: it is not that!"

"Why should my going distress you so, then, my child?"

"I cannot tell—I do not know: I am very selfish, I fear; but no! it is not that I want your farther aid; do not give me anything more; we shall now be able to get along, I am sure we shall!"

Notwithstanding Ruth's unfeigned reluctance to deprive Stanford of any more money, he insisted on leaving her five dollars, by way of capital to start with. Then, giving the boys some advice as to obtaining employment, he took a last affectionate farewell of the orphans. Hardly had he quitted the house, when it entered his mind to turn back, and leave some directions with Ruth that should enable him to find her in the event of his returning to New-York. She did not have his address, and was ignorant even of his whole name. He hesitated, walked back a few paces, then abandoned his intention, turned, and resumed his course home-

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ward. It was his design to remain in Europe for many years. Was it not better to leave their reunion to accident? Other thoughts came to claim his attention, and the purpose was forgotten. During his moment of vacillation, Ruth had been lamenting that he had not done the very thing that his own mind had suggested. Why not send Arthur after him, and make the inquiry? A blush tinged her cheek at the idea. Her eyes fell upon the table. What object made her start? It was a little silver pencil-case which had been accidentally left by Stanford. She eagerly seized it, and pressed it to her lips. Then, bidding Arthur hasten after the owner and restore it to him, she surrendered it into her brother's hands. Arthur soon returned with the information that he had been unable to find Mr. Stanford, and Ruth received the precious relic and placed it next her bosom.

An hour or two afterward, the articles which Stanford had promised to send arrived, and the boys brought them up stairs. Ruth spread the table for the day's last meal, and the rest of the children did ample justice to it with their keen appetites, but she could not eat a morsel.

What is the matter with you, Ruth?

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CHAPTER V.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY.

Most punctiliously was all Stanford's advice obeyed by the little family of orphans. Such a sprinkling of cold water, and such a ventilation of rooms as were had the next morning in their garret, would have satisfied the severest observer of the rules of health.

Before seven o'clock order was restored, and the "breakfast things" were cleared away.

"And now, boys," said Ruth, "what's to be done? We must to-day begin to get our own living, and it will not do to be idle a moment. What was that plan which you had in your head, Frank?"

"Give me a dollar to start with, and I will tell you when I come home to-night," replied Frank.

"There it is," said Ruth, placing the money in his hand. "But before you go, Frank, let me beg you not to get into any trouble. Take care of yourself, and think how worried we shall all be unless you return home in good season."

"I won't get into a fight if I can help it, Ruth," returned Frank. "You may be sure of that. I shall be too busy in trying to make this one dollar two."

"Well, I will rely upon your affection, Frank, to obey me, when I charge you to avoid all

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quarrelsome company, and to lay out your money prudently. You are a very little boy to be trusted in this way; but necessity makes us older than time."

"I know a thing or two, Ruth, so don't worry about me. Now good-by till nightfall."

Saying thus, Frank clapped on his redoubtable hat, the sight of which made Ruth shudder with apprehension, and adroitly placing the dollar bill in some mysterious pocket near his left shoulder, he started on his secret expedition.

Poor Arthur was puzzled to devise some kind of employment for himself. Unlike his brother, who was fond of activity and bustle, he had a taste for study and for reading. He was never so happy as when poring over some book, which either added to his store of knowledge, or fed his sense of the beautiful. Had he been capable of envy, he would have almost envied Frank his boldness and alacrity, his defiance of oppression, his self-reliance and unhesitating fearlessness of address.

"What *shall* I do, Ruth?" asked Arthur. "You know that I am willing and anxious to work."

"Ay, but the work will not come to us; we must go to the work," replied Ruth. "I think you would better take a walk through Grand-street and the Bowery, and inquire of the shop-keepers if they can give you employment."

"I do so hate to be harshly answered or slighted!" said Arthur. "I cannot bear to ask a favour."

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"It is no favour which you ask, my dear brother; it is not very probable that any one will engage you unless he means to make you useful, and get out of you the value of your wages—perhaps more."

"You are right, Ruth. I will go, and do my best. So good-by till I return."

Arthur quitted the room, and the two sisters were left alone.

"And now, May Loveday, what can you do to help along?" asked Ruth, kissing the little one's cheek.

"Let me think. I can sew almost as well as you can—can't I, Ruth?"

"That you can, my dear, and will soon sew a great deal better, I hope. Well, you shall employ yourself to-day in mending the boys' shirts and stockings. By-and-by, perhaps, we can get work for you that shall bring us money."

"When may I begin, Ruth?"

"At once. Here are the clothes, and here needles and thread."

As soon as Ruth had, in this manner, found occupation for all her little family, she sat down and thought long and intently as to what means of employment she could discover for herself. In plain sewing she was sure that she could give satisfaction, but, from consulting with Mrs. Bangs, she learned that there were so many poor girls seeking for work of that kind, that it was difficult to procure it even at the lowest price. Ruth thought that she could assist Mrs. Bangs at the wash-tub; but the latter assured her that she would hazard her health in the at-

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tempt, as her constitution was delicate. Even if she *could* wash and iron, Mrs. Bangs could not give her employment, as she did not have more than enough for herself and girls.

Most earnestly did Ruth think and think, striving to hit upon some plan for exerting her faculties, to obtain a maintenance. She was almost in despair as Mrs. Bangs left the room without having been able to aid her in her efforts. She thought over all the various ways of getting a living of which she had ever heard, but no one seemed to present encouragement to her.

Resolving not to be idle with her hands, however, even while her thoughts were busy, she opened the desk that had belonged to her father to find some needles that she remembered to have placed there. As she was rummaging among the old papers and account-books with which it was filled, her hand encountered some little square blocks of rosewood, and she drew them forth. They were relics of her father's art of an engraver. Several of them were blank, but others were covered with very beautiful drawings, in readiness to be engraved. Two or three of them had been partially engraved by Mr. Loveday, and required only a few hours' work with the graver to be completed.

Ruth examined them for some moments in silence, while softened recollections of both her parents stole over her mind. Suddenly she started as if a happy thought had occurred to her. She had often watched her father while he was at work with his graver. He had some-

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times permitted her to make a few indentations upon a block with her own hand. She had once marked the lines that represented an elephant's trunk in so fine a manner, that Mr. Loveday declared he could not have done it better himself. She had also drawn figures in India ink upon wood, and, before her father had been reduced by penury, and domestic cares claimed all her attention, she had frequently found amusement for days in her pencil.

As these reminiscences passed rapidly through Ruth's mind, she asked herself the question, "Why cannot I complete these engravings, and sell them? What if it is not exactly a woman's work, cannot I make it so? And if it be well done, will the purchaser care by whom it may have been executed? Oh! what a lucky, lucky idea! I will set to work straightway."

"What is the matter, Ruth?" asked May, looking up from her sewing as her sister suddenly gave her a kiss that almost took away her breath, and then danced around her like a spirit of joy.

"I have found it! I am so happy!" was all that Ruth could reply.

My readers are probably aware that engraving on wood, though a very delicate operation, and one in which great talent and ingenuity should be exercised, is still extremely simple. The graver is a little chisel, pointed much like an ordinary penknife. After the picture is drawn on the wood, all the white places in it are dug out with this chisel, and the dark lines are left raised above them, varying in fineness

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and direction according to the style of the drawing and the disposition of shade. To be a good engraver on wood, an acute mechanical touch, a keen eye, a nice taste, and a patient, persevering temper are requisite.

In the desk Ruth found several of the little chisels used in the art, neatly done up in paper. With these, and a shelf raised near the window, on which to place the block, she would be in readiness to go to work. The shelf was arranged by placing one chair upon another in a suitable light. Rapidly effecting her preparations, she selected one of the partially engraved blocks, and concentrated all her faculties upon the task of completing the cut.

Minutes and hours flew rapidly by. About two o'clock the girls made a hearty dinner upon a couple of ship-biscuit and a bowl of milk, and then resumed their tasks. Twilight came on, but they were hardly aware of its approach until it grew too dark to see distinctly. Then Ruth carefully laid aside the engraving upon which she had been engaged, examined little May's achievements with the needle, praised her for her industry and skill, lit a candle, and prepared a warm supper for the boys, whom she now every moment expected. It was not long before Arthur arrived. He had not been successful in his search for employment, and returned sad and desponding. Ruth soon cheered him, however, by her own rose-coloured thoughts and sunny hopes, showing him the work she had done, and encouraging him to "try again."

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"But where can Frank be all this time?" said she, as she looked out at the starry heavens and the gathering shades of night.

"Where *can* he be?" echoed May.

The clock struck nine, and still no Frank came. The children grew anxious, then alarmed. Another hour rolled drearily by, during which they went every other moment to the window, looked for his appearance, and listened for his footfall.

Who has not felt the pain of such solicitude as the young Lovedays now experienced—the sickness of the heart produced by the unaccountable delay of a beloved object? What accidents, and dangers, and dreary contingencies does Fancy conjure up, as minute after minute passes, and no sign of his coming is seen or heard! Hark! the door opens. He is come! No! it is not the expected one. What figure is that in the dingy distance? It is his! No! it turns in a direction different from that which *he* would have pursued. Why does he not return? He must know how anxious we are. He surely would not willingly keep us in this terrible suspense. Some accident *must* have befallen him. Perhaps he went on the water, and is drowned. Perhaps he has been run over by a cart. Perhaps—but why conjecture, where conjecture is boundless in its scope?

After waiting till it was past ten o'clock, Ruth and Arthur put on their cloaks, and, leaving May in bed, sallied forth in search of their missing brother. The night was cold, though clear, and they wandered from street to street,

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inquiring of all the watchmen they encountered if they "*had seen anything of a little boy with a big hat on his head.*"

"Are you sure the hat was on his head?" asked one of them, in reply.

Arthur unsuspectingly answered in the affirmative.

"Was he a *very* small boy?"

"About half a head shorter than I am."

"Didn't he have pantaloons on, and a jacket?"

"Yes, yes," said Ruth, eagerly.

"Were his shoes rather dirty?"

"It is very likely. Pray tell us what has happened to him."

"Was his hat a very big black hat?"

"Oh, yes! Where is he?"

"Well, I don't recollect having seen any such boy;" and, saying thus, the man laughed heartily, as if he flattered himself he had been very funny.

The children turned away surprised and disappointed. By others, of whom they made inquiries, they were kindly treated. But, after traversing the streets for two hours, they were obliged to return home unsuccessful in their search. Frank had not made his appearance. Weary and sad, Ruth and Arthur retired to bed, but could not compose themselves to sleep.

The next day was Sunday, and a sad Sunday it was for the three orphans. They renewed their search for Frank, but it was still unavailing, and another miserable night rolled laggingly by. Monday came, but still Frank was looked for in vain.

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On Tuesday morning, as, silent and disconsolate, they were sitting down to breakfast, a noise was heard on the stairs, and—

But the event is worthy to form the subject of a new chapter.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE TRAVELLER IN SPITE OF HIMSELF, OR A NEWSBOY'S MISHAP.

THE mysterious noise upon the stairs was occasioned by the return of no less important a character than Master Frank Loveday.

"Hurrah for our side!" exclaimed he, dashing into the room where the melancholy party were assembled.

An exclamation of astonishment—of gratitude to Heaven, was the first salutation with which he was received. Then Ruth threw her arms about his neck, kissed him over and over again, looked in his face after every embrace, to assure herself that it was really he, and wept and laughed by turns. After a general welcome had been given to him, questions were poured in so fast, that, had he had fifty tongues, he could not have answered them all. So he wisely concluded to defer explanations for the present, replying, with an air of profound mystery, that he had had important business to attend to which required him to leave the city.

"Do not tantalize us, Frank, but tell us at once what you have been about," said Ruth.

"How do you like my toggery?" observed he, strutting around the room, and displaying an entirely new suit of clothes, new shoes and stockings.

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"Where have you been these two days?" asked Arthur.

"Ahem! Who wants money?" exclaimed Frank, pulling a little leathern bag from his pocket, jingling it, and tossing it in the air. In his left hand he held a bundle strung upon a stick, to which he also seemed to attach no small importance.

"You are like a house all new but the roof, Frank," said Arthur. "I wonder you didn't get another hat while you were in the way of good luck. The one you have on looks bigger and uglier than ever."

"I love it," replied Frank, taking it off, and affectionately smoothing what once might have been a nap. "It is made of first-rate beaver. I don't believe such a piece of beaver can be found in New-York. It has seen service since I left you. But don't suppose I couldn't sport something of a newer fashion if I wanted to. Look here!"

Frank untied the bundle with his teeth, and, tossing out his old clothes, took from under them a new patent-leather cap.

"Water-proof!" ejaculated he, gazing at it, and shaking his head with the air of a man who is a good judge of a prime article when he sees it.

"Oh, Frank! your left eye is all purple, and green, and yellow, and red, and every sort of colour," exclaimed little May, looking wonderingly up in his face.

"To be sure it is, May!" he replied. "And here is a tooth that was knocked out of my

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mouth the same time I got this dig in my peeper."

"Let me beg you not to use such language, Frank," said Ruth. "I fear you have been among bad boys. You have been fighting—have you not?"

"Yes; and I guess you would have had to fight too, if you had been plagued as I was."

"What has happened? Do tell us all about it."

As Frank's narrative was somewhat prolix and discursive, I will take the liberty of condensing it into the briefest space compatible with fidelity.

The mighty project which he had in his head when he left home on Saturday morning, was that of entering into the newspaper business, in emulation of the individual to whom he had formerly alluded as Sam Stuggs. In pursuance of this momentous enterprise, he had, early in the morning, visited the publication offices of the large morning newspapers, and expended forty-eight cents of his capital in copies of the Courier and Enquirer, Journal of Commerce, and Morning Express. The retail price of these was six cents apiece; but Frank, being a wholesale customer, had to give only four cents. Should he succeed, therefore, in disposing of his twelve copies at retail, his profit would be twenty-four cents, or, more probably, a quarter of a dollar. He was deeply impressed with the magnitude of his investment, and, folding his stock in trade carefully under his arm, he started up Wall-street, crying at the top of his

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lungs, "Here's the Courier and Enquirer, Journal of Commerce, and Express! Here they go! Have a morning paper, sir?"

But, before he became regularly settled in business as a news-boy, there was an ordeal to pass through, of which poor Frank had not dreamed. At the corner of Nassau-street he encountered a knot of ragged urchins, who had long preoccupied the ground upon which he had ventured. They were of various ages and heights. Some had on long loose coats, that had originally been made for their grandfathers, and the tails of which dragged upon the ground as they walked; some were accoutred in jackets, which, like a botanical garden, were laid out in patches; others had on enormous boots incrusted with mud, imbedded in rigid wrinkles; while with others, who had been fast of growth, the pantaloons hardly reached the knee.

Notwithstanding the eccentricities in dress by which they were all more or less distinguished, Frank's hat was a phenomenon for which they were not at all prepared. He was, moreover, a "new man"—an intruder. How could he be suffered to pass unpersecuted?

"Hullo! Who is this?" exclaimed one of the big urchins, who was known as the Major, and who wore an overcoat made of an old carpet, while his head was encased in a sailor's Scotch cap of many colours.

Frank remembered Ruth's warning to avoid getting into quarrels, and he hurried on, hoping to escape annoyance; but the Major placed himself directly in his way, and compassionate-

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ly inquired "if his anxious mother knew that he was out."

"I have no mother," replied Frank.

"You have a hat, at any rate," said the Major, laconically, at the same time knocking it off his head.

Frank stooped to pick it up; but, before he could do so, a boy who went by the appellation of Bully Hyde gave it a kick, which sent it across the street. A shout was instantly set up by the rest of the little crowd of tormentors, who now rushed towards the dishonoured hat to play with it at football. Frank ran to recover it; but, as he again stooped, a lad about his own size, who had been named by his associates "Barking Billy," from his remarkable talent at imitating the yelping of a dog, pushed him into the mud, scattering and soiling his newspapers, and eliciting from Bully Hyde and the rest very decided marks of approbation and amusement at the success of the feat.

Burning with indignation, Frank grasped his hat, placed it, "with all its imperfections," on his head, and, abandoning his newspapers, which had now been rendered valueless by having been trampled in the dirt, he flew at "Barking Billy," and with a single blow laid him prostrate.

The effect of this sudden punishment upon the accomplished imitator of the canine species partook somewhat of the ludicrous. At first he uttered a blubbering cry, such as might proceed from a child on being soundly whipped; then, apparently forgetting himself, he gave

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expression to his pain in the yelping, doglike sounds which he had practised so often that it was like a second nature to give them utterance; and in this way he fluctuated from human to brutal noises. Had you heard without seeing him, you might have supposed that a dog and a cat were fighting, and that each, in turn, got the advantage.

The news-boys seemed awed for a moment by Frank's display of pugnacity. But soon one of them, who was called Dick, and who considerably excelled him in size, came up, and, taking him by the collar, asked, "What did you do that for?"

"What did he push me into the mud for, and spoil my papers?" reinterrogated Frank.

"Take that—and that!" replied Master Dick, slapping him violently in the face.

For a second Frank was blinded by the unexpected blows; but, soon recovering himself, he gave back Master Dick's cuffs with interest.

"A ring! a ring!" shouted the rest of the hopeful gang; and a ring was at once formed.

Frank's blood was up, and he resolved to stand by his rights to the last. Master Dick took off his jacket and gave it to one of his friends, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and moistened his hands, with the evident desire of frightening his antagonist by his deliberate and business-like preparations. But Frank was not cowed.

"Why don't you go at it?" cried the Major, who was impatient of delay.

"I won't fight unless I am forced to," replied Frank.

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Attributing this remark to faint-heartedness, Master Dick commenced the combat by hitting Frank a blow in the eye. After this provocation, Frank had no compunction in giving himself up, heart and hand, to the defence of his person from farther abuse. He repelled the clumsy blows aimed at him by others more effective, and suffered from but one more wound, that in his mouth. It soon became evident that Master Dick was getting the worst of the encounter, or, as the Major expressed it, that "he had waked up the wrong passenger." Fainter and more timid grew his movements; and finally, as Frank put all his will into a parting blow at his left shoulder, he gave way and uttered a yell which rivalled the recent efforts of "Barking Billy" himself. With this vocal performance the contest ended.

"Does anybody else want to be served in the same way?" asked Frank, who, now that his hand was in, seemed disposed to "do up" all his fighting. "There is a plenty more steam in this boiler!"

The boys laughed and flocked around him, but no one seemed disposed to plague him any more. The Major clapped him on the shoulder, and declared that he had proved himself worthy of being a news-boy, and that he should thenceforth be known by the honourable appellation of "Little Tuffy."

Frank replied that "he didn't like nicknames."

Then a boy, whose principal article of dress appeared to be a long black surtout, and who

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was known to his fellows as *the Deacon*, came up to Frank, and begged his acceptance of a handful of peanuts—an overture of kindness which was not declined.

As soon as he could rid himself of his new friends, to whom, by-the-way, he might sincerely have said, with Jacques in the play, "I do desire we may be better—strangers," Frank went to the pump at the head of Pearl-street, and spent nearly an hour in cleaning himself. He then examined into the state of his finances, and found that he had just fifty-two cents in his pocket, and with this sum, as the morning papers were now almost out of date, he concluded that he would buy thirteen of the evening prints. Could he sell these, he should be left with seventy-eight cents, thus making his loss produced by the onslaught of "Barking Billy" just twenty-two cents. Had he been able to dispose of his entire stock, his profits would have amounted to half a dollar.

After indulging in these calculations, Frank went to the office of the New-York American, and asked when it would be published.

"The evening papers go to press at one o'clock," replied the clerk.

It was then just eleven, and Frank had two hours to pass before he could resume his business. Not knowing how to employ himself, he walked up Broadway, and looked in at Colman's shop-windows, where some very beautiful engravings were exhibited. Having a taste for pictures, he entertained himself very well for an hour in examining them. Then, continuing

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his walk, he passed the Astor House, and made a reconnoitring tour as far as Chambers-street. Here he spied a doctor's wagon standing at the door of a private house. The horse attached to it, becoming restiff, soon began to walk away. Frank, seeing no one by to check him, went up, seized him by the bridle, and stopped him. At that instant the doctor came forth from the house, and saw what had happened. He looked up the street, and then down, and appeared quite vexed at the absence of some one who should have attended to the horse. Finally, he came up, thanked Frank for what he had done, and offered him a shilling; but the latter declined it, feeling that he had not earned it. The doctor looked surprised, and was about to ask his name, when a big, clumsy boy came running up, and, pushing Frank away, held the horse himself.

"So you have come just when you are not wanted, Master Thomas!" said the doctor. "Don't you know that the horse might have run away had he not been stopped by this good lad?"

"I was only a rod or two off," muttered the boy.

"You should have a rod or two *on*—your back," replied the doctor. "Now you may just let go that bridle, and leave my service. Here is a dollar, which is all that will be due you a week hence. I shall not want you any more."

The boy began to whimper, and beg to be retained.

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"If this were the first time, Thomas, or the second, that I had found you disobeying me and neglecting my interests, I would not mind it; but your promises of amendment are no sooner made than broken. You need not plead any more. I have made my mind up. You may go."

Thomas, finding that the doctor was serious and determined, grew insolent, and declared that he had long wished to go, and that no money would induce him to stay. Saying thus, he shook his fist menacingly at poor Frank, and went his way.

Frank, with that spirit of investigation which usually characterized him, had listened attentively to this dialogue, and after it was over he said,

"Doctor, I can tell you of a first-rate boy."

"Is he a boy that fights, and gets black eyes?" asked the doctor, with a smile.

"Oh, no, I don't mean myself, but a much better boy than I am—my brother, Arthur Loveday."

The doctor seemed amused at Frank's forwardness, and made inquiries, with which he was so well satisfied that he consented to give Arthur a trial, remarking that he should wish him to be present at his house early on Monday morning; and with this he drove off.

Highly delighted with the arrangement he had made for his brother, Frank hurried down Broadway towards the offices of the evening papers. Making the purchases he had contemplated, he now started, with renewed spirits, to cry his wares through the streets.

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"Here's the Evening Post, Evening Star, Commercial Advertiser, and New-York American! Here they go!" screamed Frank, running up Wall-street at the top of his speed.

By four o'clock he had sold eight newspapers. He then went down to the pier near the Battery from which the large steamboats for Providence were accustomed to start. Here, as the passengers collected, he disposed of four more copies. As he stood upon the wharf, an old gentleman on board the boat asked him for the Evening Star. It chanced to be the last paper of his stock, and, crossing the plank that led to the lower deck, Frank ran to dispose of it. He had heard a bell a minute before, accompanied with the noise of the letting-off of steam, and, as he rushed towards the boat, he noticed that the rest of the news-boys were scampering out of it. Still he did not apprehend anything; and, as the old gentleman quite composedly drew out his purse, and slowly searched for a sixpence, Frank supposed that all must be right. He was soon undeceived by feeling the planks beneath him in motion, and hearing a news-boy on the pier, with a yell and a laugh of ecstasy, which were re-echoed by the rest of the fraternity, exclaim, "See! see! Little Tuffy is on board! He has stayed too long! He will have to go to Providence! Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Whoop!"

Frank, in desperation, left the old gentleman fumbling for the sixpence, and rushed towards the plank. It had been withdrawn. He retreated a step, with the intention of making a leap to

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the land; but a sailor held him back, saying, "Would you break your neck, you young scapegrace?"

At this crisis, the delight of the little tatterdemalions on the wharf appeared to reach absolute delirium. They whooped, they shouted, they laughed, they roared, till you might have thought that a whole caravan of young hyænas had broken loose: some of them jumped Jim Crow; others threw up their legs and walked on their hands. The promising youth known as "Barking Billy" yelped as if a whole pack of hounds were undergoing a scourging. The "Deacon," in direct violation of those habits of decorum and sobriety which are supposed to distinguish deacons, turned a somerset; and the "Major" gave vent to his superflux of spirits by knocking down some of the smaller newsboys.

Bewildered and confounded, Frank gazed upon them with a sort of stupid consternation. The distance between him and the land grew greater and greater. The boat rounded the Battery, and he was relieved of the sight of the exulting spectators of his mischance. He now began to realize the nature of his situation; and as he thought of Ruth, and the painful anxiety to which those at home would be subjected by his absence, the big tears started to his eyes. He ran to the captain's office to beg him to turn back the boat and let him get out; but there was such a crowd of men about it paying their passage-money that he could not make himself heard.

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As he was bitterly deploring this unlooked-for accident, the old gentleman, at whose beck he had come on board, encountered him, and asked, "Are you not the lad who sold me this paper, and didn't take your pay?"

"Yes, sir," replied Frank, manfully checking his tears. "The boat started before I could reach the plank."

"Bless me! it was all my fault, my little man. I should have known better than to ask you to come to me at such a moment."

"I should have known better than to have minded you," replied Frank, wiping a lingering tear from his cheek with his sleeve.

"Never fret about it, my little man," said the old gentleman, whose name was Lawrence, and who carried in his hand a big cane with an ivory head. "Never mind! You shall be taken care of."

"I am not afraid for myself," replied Frank; "but—" and the thoughts of those at home again started a tear.

"But what, little man?"

"I know that my sisters and brother will be terribly anxious about me, and I can't get back to them again till Tuesday—so I heard one of the sailors say. Besides, I had found such a nice place for Arthur! And if he isn't there on Monday morning at six o'clock, I am afraid he will lose it."

The old gentleman seemed interested by Frank's earnestness of manner, and made many inquiries about him and his family, to which very satisfactory answers were rendered. The

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account of his adventures that morning with the news-boys, and the manner in which he came by his black eye, made Mr. Lawrence laugh very heartily, whereupon Frank laughed too, and entirely forgot that he had been shedding tears.

"Well, Frank," said the old gentleman, "as I got you into this scrape, I must get you out of it. Ruth and Arthur will undoubtedly be much troubled by your absence, but I don't see as you can do them any good by worrying about it yourself; if you could, there might be some sense in your grief. The best way is to endure with cheerfulness what we cannot prevent: is it not so?"

"Yes, sir, I am sure it is; and I don't mean to fret about it any more."

"That is right. It's an ill wind indeed that doesn't blow us good of some kind. After all, you may not be the loser by this little accident. I will see the captain, who is a nephew of mine, and settle for your passage. You shall visit Providence, where I live. In the morning, we will borrow a suit of clothes from a grandson of mine about your size, and you shall attend church with me and my family. On Monday, we will go to a tailor's, and procure a full new suit for you; and in the afternoon, you shall return to this boat, which will land you early the next morning at the spot you last quitted."

"That's good! Thank you, sir—thank you!" exclaimed Frank, as these brilliant prospects were opened to his imagination.

On the East River, Mr. Lawrence pointed out

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to his young companion all the buildings and objects of note calculated to strike his attention, and seemed much amused by the boy's eager and intelligent questions. When the bell that summoned the passengers to the tea-table sounded, he gave Frank a seat at his side, and was pleased to see him eat a hearty meal. Well might it have been hearty, for the little fellow had not tasted a morsel since breakfast.

All Mr. Lawrence's promises were faithfully fulfilled. Frank passed the night on a cot in the gentlemen's cabin, and rose early on Sunday morning much refreshed. Arriving in Providence, he was neatly accoutred, and taken to church, as had been proposed; and the next day was presented with the promised new suit, including the "patent-leather cap" already commemorated. In the afternoon Mr. Lawrence took him on board the steamboat, gave him five bright half-dollar pieces, and arranged for him a free conveyance back to New-York, where, in due season, the young wanderer arrived safe and sound, as has before been narrated.

I have done but partial justice to Frank's animated description of his adventures, omitting entirely his account of the marvels of his voyage—the light-houses he had seen at night—the big waves they had encountered off Point Judith—the sight of another steamboat at sea—the wonders of the machinery—and, finally, the agreeable visit to Mr. Lawrence's house at Providence. All these details I must leave to the imagination of my readers.

Having finished his story, Frank gave all his

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money, amounting to five dollars and twenty-eight cents, into the hands of Ruth. Then, resuming his old clothes and hat, he announced his intention of continuing his occupation of news-vender, and asked for another dollar with which to make a new purchase of stock. Ruth gave it to him, with the earnest entreaty that he would not get into any more fights.

"There is no danger of their troubling me again," replied Frank. "If I hadn't given them that specimen of spunk, I couldn't have gone into the street without being plagued by them."

"But, Frank," said Arthur, "where does this Doctor Remington live that you talk about?"

"Oh, come with me, and I will show you. I don't believe he has engaged a boy yet."

Frank was right in his surmise. Doctor Remington, on learning the reason why Arthur had not called at the time fixed upon, seemed perfectly satisfied. He liked Arthur's appearance and intelligent replies, and offered to pay him a dollar and a half a week for his services, at which Frank and Arthur exchanged congratulations, and the bargain was at once closed.

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CHAPTER VII.

ADVENTURES AT HOME.

As soon as Ruth was restored to tranquillity by her brother's auspicious return, she resumed her labours upon the woodcut with new spirit and hope. In a week she had completed it to her satisfaction. Through Frank's agency, she procured a little box of printing-ink and some fine paper, and with them took what is called a *proof impression* of the engraving.

"It's a first-rate picture!" was Frank's exclamation, as, with a beating heart and a cautious hand, Ruth drew off the paper from the block, and looked at the print it had received. As she scanned it, she could not prevent a blush of satisfaction and pleasure from rising to her forehead. The result was entirely successful. All the lines of the engraving seemed to be in their right places and of the proper width. It formed, as Frank had asserted in his peculiar phraseology, "a first-rate picture."

Mrs. Bangs was called in to look at it, and the good woman could hardly find expression for her admiration and astonishment at the inspection.

"Now, the next question is," said Ruth, "how shall we manage to dispose of it?"

"I know where a wood engraver keeps," ex-

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claimed Frank. "I will take it to him, and see what he will pay for it."

"So you shall, Frank," replied Ruth; and, carefully wrapping up the cut in paper, she consigned it to his charge.

He started off with his usual alacrity, and, hurrying through the Bowery to Chatham-street, knocked at the door of a Mr. Slimsy, who was accustomed to cut rude designs on wood.

"Well, what is wanted, boy?" asked Mr. Slimsy, rather testily.

"I have a woodcut that I would like to sell you," replied Frank, displaying the specimen, which he held, of Ruth's handiwork.

"Did you steal this, you little rascal?" inquired the engraver, examining it with some surprise.

"Don't judge other people by yourself, Slimsy," retorted Frank, kindling into anger.

"How—what—you insolent little—you ragamuffin—Slimsy indeed! where are your manners?"

"Gone in search of yours, I suspect. I am no thief, Slimsy."

"What are you?"

"I am a news-boy."

"Oh! then that accounts for your impudence. Had you been anything else, I should have kicked you into the street."

"That's a game at which two can play, Slimsy. But let's to business. What will you give a fellow for that cut?"

"Well, I suppose it's worth a dollar, or a dollar and a half, or thereabout."

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"I shouldn't be surprised if it was," said Frank, stretching out his hand to receive it.

"I will give you a dollar and a half for it, although that is more than it is worth; but I don't mind parting with a little in charity."

"That's humbug—I know it is," exclaimed Frank, with a very positive air. "If you can't give me a fair price for the thing, just say so."

"Will you take three dollars for it?" asked Slimsy.

Frank hesitated for a moment, and then replied, "No, I won't."

"Leave the premises, then, before I thrash you," said Mr. Slimsy, who began to grow quite enraged because he could not outwit a mere urchin.

"Give me the cut, first," said Frank.

"What if I don't?" inquired Mr. Slimsy.

"I will go and bring up my gang to settle the business with you. It is just as well, perhaps. So don't concern yourself, Slimsy, about giving it up."

The renegade artist—if the cherished name *artist* can be applied to such a one—turned pale at the idea of having his windows broken by the news-boys; but he still seemed very reluctant to part with the engraving. There was no name upon it, and it had occurred to him to advance his reputation by passing it off as his own. After haggling some minutes more, he said, in conclusion, "Well, look here, boy—I will give you five dollars for it, and that's a fair price."

"You shall have it at that," replied Frank.

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"Can you bring me any more like it at the same price?" asked Slimsy, eagerly.

"I shouldn't be surprised if I could bring you one a week."

"Well, don't fail to bring them to me first. If you take them to anybody else, I shall refuse them. The only reason why I am so liberal with you now is, that you may know where to come the next time."

Saying this, Mr. Slimsy paid Frank the five dollars, and reiterating his charge, that if he had any more such engravings to dispose of, he must come to him *first*, he bade him good-by with affected cordiality; and, the moment he had closed the door, exclaimed to himself, "The little sharper! After all, he managed to get out of me almost half as much as the cut was worth."

Ruth was elated at the result of Frank's negotiation. To her it seemed supremely successful, and she looked upon her little brother as the most wonderful of financiers. When he placed in her hand the five-dollar bill she had earned by her own invention and skill, it sent a far more delightful sensation to her heart than if thousands had fallen to her share through the mere caprice of Fortune. A glow of satisfaction and self-respect pervaded her bosom. By the energy of her own will she had discovered a means, and by the labour and cunning of her own hands she had accomplished an end!

The good news was soon communicated to Mrs. Bangs, who readily participated in the joy of her young tenant.

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"How fortunate, my dear," said she, "that you should have hit upon this scheme for getting along! Here you have made in one week, with the aid of this little chisel, as much as I can make by all my labour at the washing-tub and the ironing-board. I am sure you should be thankful to Heaven for giving you your pretty talent, and sparing you such tedious drudgery as I have to put up with."

"I *am* grateful, Mrs. Bangs. I am certain that I feel so, for I have many causes for continual gratitude. In the first place, we all enjoy excellent health; then I have hit upon an employment which will amply support us; then Arthur has found a nice place with Doctor Remington, who lends him books, and lets him read them while he is sitting in the chaise attending to the horse, which, you know, is much better than if he had to be idle all the while, or to be shut up from the fresh air at some unwholesome task; and then Frank is such a smart, manly little fellow! Do you know, he sometimes makes half a dollar a day selling newspapers? But I do not altogether like his occupation. He is obliged to mix with rude, foul-mouthed boys, and must necessarily learn some of their slang; though, when I hear him say his prayers at night, I try to blot out all the evil impressions he may have got during the day. We shall soon be able, I hope, to find him a place in some good merchant's store. As for May, she is the bravest little housewife of my acquaintance. You should come up here some night, and see her pour out tea."

"Tea! Do you have tea?" exclaimed Mrs. Bangs, surprised at the intelligence.

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"Oh, yes! 'Grampar' gave it to us," lisped May.

"I didn't know you had a 'grampar,' my dear," said Mrs. Bangs.

"I must let you into a secret, Mrs. Bangs," interrupted Ruth, smiling. "The other afternoon I sent May round to Mr. Bibb's, the grocer's, to buy some candles. It was almost an hour before she returned, and I had begun to get worried about her. When she came, such a long story she had to tell me about 'a nice, funny, fat old man' whom she had met, and who had kissed her, and given her some raisins, and made her tell him where she lived, that I thought she would never have done talking about it. The next day, who should knock at the door and walk in but Mr. Bibb! And then, such romping and laughing as there was between him and May, you never heard. He made May promise to call him 'Grampar,' and the same evening he came up again, with his pockets filled with seed-cakes, loaf-sugar, and a paper of black tea. Arthur and Frank came in. I hunted up a teapot, and Mr. Bibb taught May how to prepare the tea, and pour it out; then we all sat round the table, with her at the head, and *such* a pleasant time as we had! And such *funny* stories as he told us! He kept us all laughing till bedtime."

"My stars! What would his wife say if she knew it all!" exclaimed Mrs. Bangs.

"I do not think she makes his home happy to him," said Ruth; "for he comes up here every evening now, and May is quite uneasy unless she sees 'grampar' at least once in the course of the day."

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"He is extravagantly fond of children, and his wife hates them," resumed Mrs. Bangs.

"How happens it," asked Ruth, "that we do not hear any music now from the room below, as we used to?"

"Ah! the poor old 'Mounseer' has been very ill indeed, and I am afraid his purse is getting low too; for, since paying me his rent last week, he hasn't sent out to buy anything but a little coffee. He lies in bed all day, figuring music with his pen and ink, and looking wistfully at his piano-forte, without having the strength to play."

"I wish I could help him," said Ruth, musingly.

"I wish you could, my dear; but—My stars! it is after five o'clock, and I haven't sent those shirts yet to Mr. Dangleton! Here! William! William Bangs!" and with these exclamations the good woman hurried down stairs.

Ruth continued to muse upon what had been just told her about the Mounseer. "He is old and sick," thought she; "a stranger too, and in a strange land. He has no daughter to smooth his pillow, to hand him his drink, and to speak to him in sweet, comforting tones." The tears started to her eyes at the picture her own fancy had helped to draw, and she at once resolved to follow the impulse of her heart.

"I am going down stairs, May, a few minutes," said she, "to see how the poor French gentleman is getting on. Do you keep house till I return."

"Oh, yes. 'Grampar' and the boys will be

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here soon," said the little one, well contented to assume the responsibility devolved upon her.

Ruth knocked softly at the invalid's door, and in a few minutes she could distinguish a faint voice whispering "Come in!"

She entered, closed the door, and approached the bedside, near which stood a chair covered with blotted music, upon which lay an inkstand, some pens, a pair of spectacles, and a cup of cold coffee.

The pale face which peered above the bedclothes belonged apparently to a man who had passed the age of sixty. His hair was gray, his chin and nose were prominent, and there were deep wrinkles on his forehead and about the corners of his mouth.

He smiled benignantly, lifting his cheekbones and his eyebrows nearly an inch out of their places in the effort, and said, as Ruth made her appearance,

"*Bien! qu'est ce que c'est, ma petite?* Vat is it you want, leetel girl?"

"I am Ruth Loveday, sir, who has the room up stairs; and I have called to see if there is anything I can do for you."

"*Merci, ma chère!* Thank you, my dear. *Vous etes très aimable.* You are very good. *Je suis malade—très malade.* I am ill—very ill. *Mais comprenez-vous ce que je dis?* But are you comprehending what I say?"

"I do not understand French, sir," said Ruth.

"*C'est dommage!* It is a pity. *C'est une belle langue, ma chère, une belle langue!* A beautiful language, my dear, a beautiful language! *Mais*

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je m'oublie—vous ne me comprenez pas? But I forget—you do not understand me?"

Ruth shook her head, and asked, "Is there nothing I can get for you? Your room is cold."

"*Oui, ma chère; il fait froid.* Yes, my dear; it is cold."

"There is but one blanket on your bed. You shiver. Wait a moment. I will bring you some clothing from my bed;" and, as she said this, it occurred to her that she could hire a couple of blankets for her own use from Mrs. Bangs.

Ruth glided noiselessly out of the sick room, and in less than two minutes returned with a sufficiency of additional bedclothes, which she threw over the invalid, who now seemed to regard her movements with a childlike, silent astonishment. Her good offices did not soon cease. She took some of her own wood and made a fire; opened the window, and ventilated the room; got some clean, fresh pillow-cases from Mrs. Bangs, and replaced the old ones with them; and then, gently lifting the invalid's head, she laid it in an easy position, and smoothed back his gray locks with her fingers.

The poor Frenchman did not speak a word all this while. He seemed to be hesitating to make up his mind whether it was a human being who was ministering to him, or whether it was not some disguised angel, who, pitying his forlorn state, had come down to earth to perform the functions of a nurse. At length a

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consciousness of Ruth's spontaneous kindness seemed to fill his soul. His breast heaved; the tears sprang to his eyes; he took one of her hands, pressed it to his lips, and said, "*Tank you ver mooch, ma chère enfant—bless you—tank you—tank you—bless you—vous m'avez déja rendu mieux.* You have already made me better. *I sall be ver well yesterday—demain—vous êtes un ange—oui, un ange.* You are an angel—yes, an angel. *Mille remercimens! Tousand tanks!*"

Ruth smiled with pleasure at the old man's excess of gratitude, and said, "You must let me take away this cup of cold coffee, which I am sure is not good for you, and I will bring you in its stead a bowl of nice hot tea and some milk biscuits. Then you shall have a tub of hot water to bathe your feet in, for you are slightly feverish; and after that you shall go to bed, and get a good night's rest: shall it not be so?"

"*Oh, oui, oui, mon enfant.* Yes, yes, my child. *Je ferai tout ce que vous désirez.* I will do all you desire. *Mais dites-moi, est-ce que vous etes un enfant? N'etes vous pas un ange?* But, tell me, are you a child? Are you not an angel?"

"I do not comprehend," said Ruth, shaking her head.

"*Ah! Je m'oublie*—Ah! I forget—*et moi—I speak Anngleesh ver leetel—mais vous sall know of me to speak Francais—parceque*—because—*c'est une jolie langue, et vous etes une jolie fille.*"

"I will go now, and prepare some tea for you," said Ruth.

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"*Du thè? Ah, merci! Mais, ecoutez-moi un moment—connaissez-vous la musique? Jouez-vous? Ah! Vous ne me comprenez-pas—Voilà my piano-forte!* Can you play?"

"I love music dearly," replied Ruth, "but I cannot play."

"*Ah, la pauvre enfant! Vous ne jouez-pas! Mais il faut jouer! Ecoutez! Vous serez donc ma petite ecolière! You sall be my leetel pupil—Voulez-vous l'être?* Will you not?"

"I will first be your nurse, and get you well; and so," said Ruth, smiling and raising her fore-finger, "you must not talk any more now. I will be soon back."

"*Ah, mon Dieu! C'est un ange!*" sighed the poor Frenchman, as Ruth glided noiselessly out of the room and closed the door.

She was not long absent. Up stairs she found the tea-table spread, and Mr. Bibb and the boys taking a jovial meal, while May presided. The worthy grocer had brought a liberal supply of seed-cakes and gingerbread, and was laughing heartily at Frank's account of his visit to Providence.

"What is the matter, Ruth?" asked Arthur, as she entered the room.

"Do not move, brother. I am merely going to take a cup of tea and some biscuit down to the poor 'Mounseer,' who occupies the room below."

"Is he quite ill, Ruth? For I can get Doctor Remington to visit him if it is advisable."

"I think, with a little careful tending, he will be soon well. So pour me out some tea, May, and let me take it to him."

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"You had better let me send him round a nice beefsteak," said Mr. Bibb.

"We will talk about that to-morrow," replied Ruth. "For the present, this will be sufficient."

And, with these words on her lips, Ruth tripped down stairs, and again stood by the bedside of her patient, who, in broken English, laboured to give some expression to his lively gratitude. He was soon so much recruited by her ministrations that he was able to sit up against the pillow. A tub-full of hot water was then brought to him by his little nurse, who, after assisting him to bathe his feet, wiped them dry, shook up his pillows, and gently placed back his head; and, assuring him that he would have a good night, and wake up much refreshed in the morning, bade him farewell. The old man lapsed into sleep, still doubting in his mind whether he had been visited by "*un ange*" or "*un enfant*"—an angel or a child.

Ruth's prognostics in regard to the poor Frenchman proved true. He rapidly recovered under her kind and watchful care; and his gratitude knew no bounds. His first impulse was to compose a long piece of music, in six parts, in her honour, which he actually accomplished, and named it "The Recovery." As, in order to do it justice in the performance, however, it would, according to Monsieur Mallet, be necessary to have an orchestra of two hundred violins, sixty trombones, ten pedal harps, twenty bassoons, a hundred flutes, twelve trumpets, fifty bass viols, fifteen kettledrums, with a great

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variety of instruments not yet introduced into this country, I despair of ever hearing this astonishing production properly presented to the American public.

The "Mounseer's" gratitude took, likewise, a more useful, if not a more complimentary direction. He commenced giving Ruth instruction in music, and persuaded her to practice a couple of hours every day upon the piano. He also taught her to speak French, not by formally initiating her into the grammatical rules, but by repeated conversations.

"But how could Ruth afford to find time for such recreations?" it may be asked.

She acquired the ability by rigid industry, by indulging herself in no vacant moments, and by a methodical arrangement of her occupations. A month passed rapidly by; and at the end of that time she paid her landlady another month's rent in advance, without subjecting herself to the apprehension of wanting enough for the daily support of her little family. An incident also occurred about this time, which shed another sunbeam upon her prospects.

Happening in at a bookstore one day, Frank recognised in a volume for the young, that had just been published, four of the identical engravings that had been executed by Ruth. He immediately went to one of the clerks, who was in the habit of buying papers of him, and asked,

"What did you have to give Slimsy for these cuts?"

"What is that to you, Frank?" inquired the clerk, in reply.

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"I have a good reason for asking; so tell me, there's a good fellow."

"Well, you are the coolest boy of your inches in the whole circle of my acquaintance. However, seeing it is you, Frank, I will look back in the daybook, and see if I can gratify your curiosity. Here it is! We paid Slimsy for those four cuts fifty dollars. Does that satisfy you?"

"Fifty dollars!" exclaimed Frank; "and he got them for twenty! Isn't that too bad?"

"Why, Slimsy engraved them himself. Don't you see his name to them? They are so well done that he has got more business than he can attend to on the strength of them."

"He didn't engrave a line of them," replied Frank. "My sister made those engravings."

"Your sister! Nonsense! I never heard of a girl's engraving on wood."

"I tell you it is so; and to prove it, I will bring you an engraving of that kind every week for the price you pay Slimsy."

"If you are really in earnest, Frank, I will speak to one of the firm about it, and I am quite sure they will gladly accept your offer, for they are getting up a number of picture-books for the spring trade."

"Well, I am in earnest, and no mistake," returned the boy; "so go and speak to Mr. Jackson about it. There he stands at the desk."

"Yes, but he is busy just now. To-morrow or the next day I may find a chance to tell him what you say."

"But why not speak to him now? I never

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put off things till to-morrow without repenting it. Go, there's a good fellow. If you won't, I will."

"Well, if you arn't a driving little chap, I don't know who is," said the clerk, laughing, and proceeding to make the desired communication to the head of the firm.

Mr. Jackson was not discomposed by the clerk's interruption of his labours. He listened attentively to what he had to say, and replied that he was not at all surprised at this instance of Slimsy's duplicity; that his suspicions of his integrity had been awakened long since; and that, knowing the man's inferiority as a wood-engraver, he had openly charged him with trickery in putting his name to those specimens of the art, the credit of which he was now satisfied belonged to another. The worthy publisher then beckoned to Frank to draw near; asked him a few questions; told him he had known his father some years ago; and, in conclusion, offered to pay him twelve dollars apiece for such cuts as Slimsy had been purchasing for five.

Thanking Mr. Jackson warmly for his kindness, Frank left the store, and put more speed into his legs in his journey home than he had ever before exerted. He was quite breathless as he rushed up stairs and burst into the room, where Ruth was hard at work upon a new drawing.

"What ails you, Frank? Why do you tear round so, and dash your hat upon the floor?" asked Ruth, turning round from her task with an expression of surprise.

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"Have you burned yourself with a hot flat-iron, brother Frank?" inquired May.

"Nonsense, May! Hold your guns up! Never say die while there's a shot in the locker!"

"Do not talk so, Frank. It is very unbecoming in a small boy like you," observed Ruth.

"Small," replied Frank, "but all-fired hard to catch, as the Irishman said of his pig; and yet that is not exactly true, for old Slimsy certainly did catch me napping, and pulled the wool over my eyes; but this child is wide awake now, or there are no omnibuses in Broadway;" saying which, Master Frank began whistling and dancing the "Fisher's Hornpipe," concluding it with saltations after the manner of Jim Crow.

"Do be quiet, and tell me the meaning of all these antics," said Ruth.

"I have made a discovery, Ruth," replied he, at length, in a sobered tone. "What do you suppose old Slimsy made a bookseller pay for your four engravings?"

"I cannot imagine," said Ruth.

"Fifty dollars! Think of that, and weep," exclaimed the boy, snapping his thumb and middle finger.

"So he made just thirty dollars out of my labour!"

"Yes, or there's no truth in the rule of subtraction."

"I am very glad to learn that he doesn't lose by me."

"Why, when I took the last cut to him, the old fox tried to beat me down. He said that

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he should lose at least a dollar apiece on the four. Oh, Slimsy! Slimsy! arn't you a deep one?"

"But, Frank, as long as he pays us punctually, we should not find fault with him."

"Listen to me. I have found out the man who buys the cuts after they leave my hands, and he is willing to pay you twelve dollars apiece for as many as you will engrave."

"Is it possible? What brave good news!" exclaimed Ruth, turning almost pale with delight; and then, checking her exultation, she said, "But will it be treating poor Mr. Slimsy well if we deprive him of this means of making money?"

"Oh, that would be very wrong, wouldn't it?" replied Frank, ironically. "And don't you think, Ruth, it is rather wicked in us to charge him so much as we do for the cuts? Only think, if we sold them to him for fifty cents instead of five dollars, he could make eleven dollars and a half upon every one. Indeed, upon the whole, wouldn't it be better to give them to him for nothing? Yes, that will be the most pious plan. Old Slimsy shall have them for nothing!"

"For shame, Frank, to laugh at me so. I deserve it, however. It is certainly a duty we owe, not only to ourselves, but to others who toil at the same trade, to put the highest market valuation upon our labours. So we will bid our new customers welcome; for now, with our increased income, we can make a good many little reforms in our management. In the first

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place, you, Frank, shall drop the news-vending business, and find some employment that will not expose you to such a rough-and-tumble kind of life as you have been leading."

"But I love to be a news-boy," said Frank. "It is first-rate fun, except when the weather is wet and cold."

"You are necessarily thrown among bad, ill-mannered boys, my dear Frank, who swear and fight, and use the strangest language, too much of which you have picked up already. Now would it not be better for you to go into some respectable store, where you will learn book-keeping and accounts, and where you will be likely to see and hear what will improve you, and fit you for a creditable place in society when you grow up?"

"You are right, sister Ruth, as you always are. I would like to be a merchant, and own ships, and go to sea sometimes myself."

"But, before you can obtain a good situation, you must go to school a while; and I think you had better commence attending forthwith."

"I will begin to-morrow, if you wish it, Ruth."

"I mean that May shall go to school also as soon as the warm weather is nigh; and who knows but that we shall get on so prosperously, that I shall be able to give an hour or two more a day to Monsieur Mallet and the piano-forte?"

"I wish that you would, Ruth; for I look upon music as first-rate. By-the-way, you can parley-voo with the Mounseer in prime style now—can't you? Your tongue seems to take to his Frenchified talk very kindly. For my part, I

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could never see the sense of calling a horse a *shovel*, or a house a *maison*. Humbug! A horse is a horse all the world over, and I should like to know why a house should be called a *maison*, when it's the mason that builds the house?"

"You have said quite enough, Frank, to convince me that you ought to go to school. You have not learned enough yet to be aware of your own ignorance; and I would not have you make yourself ridiculous, should you be thrown among intelligent people."

"Grandfather Bibb says that I know more now than many a man that has been through college."

"I dare say you do, Frank, know more—mischief," said Ruth, laughing. And then kissing his cheek, she added, "But you are a brave lad for all that, and I don't know how I should have got along without you."

"You can change me and guide me, Ruth, by a single look, but the whole city corporation couldn't make me budge if they undertook to bully me."

"I would never have you obey a command that you believed unjust or wrong, come from whom it may; but where you are not conscious of being in the right, do not be obstinate. It is far more manly to honestly confess an error, than to persist in it through vanity or a false notion of spirit."

"Well, if I go to school, there is one thing that I'll not stand from man or boy: right or wrong, I won't be struck."

"But if your conscience tells you that a punishment is merited—"

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"I don't care. Thrashing may do for beasts and for wheat in the husk, but hang me if I'll be made a brute or vegetable of. So don't try to alter my mind. If I can't learn to write and cipher without being whipped like a dog, why I'll stay ignorant. I told Grandfather Bibb the same thing, and he slapped me on the back, and said that I was a lad of wax, and that them were his sentiments."

"*Those*, not *them*, Frank," interrupted Ruth, correcting his syntax.

"That's what Grandfather Bibb said, any how," retorted Frank.

"Who is that talking about Grandfather Bibb?" exclaimed the jovial voice of the grocer on the stairs, in stern, guttural tones.

"That's grandpapa! I know his voice! He can't frighten me, if he tries," cried May, running and opening the door, and jumping into the fat man's extended arms.

Mr. Bibb entered the room with the evident air of a privileged acquaintance, took a chair, placed May upon his knee, loosened his neck-cloth, and, drawing forth a red bandana handkerchief, wiped from his forehead the perspiration produced by the effort of mounting to the attic story of the house. It was plain, however, that he considered his toil as amply recompensed by the cordial, gleeful reception which he met with from the children.

"How many cab-drivers have you knocked down to-day, Frank?" asked he, looking approvingly at the young object of his admiration, and giving one of his richest winks.

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"Frank isn't going to get into any more brawls, Mr. Bibb," said Ruth. "He means to study hard, and be a good scholar."

Ruth then briefly informed her portly visiter of the important event of the day, by which their income would be more than doubled, and Frank would be enabled to turn his attention to the improvement of his mind.

Mr. Bibb seemed a little chagrined at the idea of sending Frank to school; and while Ruth set the table and prepared the tea, he instructed "young Hopeful" in certain arts, and sleights of hand and of foot, by which he could at any time trip up a schoolmaster. To all his teachings, the boy lent a most attentive ear; and, finally, when Mr. Bibb, the more fully to explain the interesting process, rose from his chair and went through the movements, Frank undertook to test his own proficiency by experimenting upon his instructer in the mode prescribed; and, seizing him by the leg, actually upset him upon the floor. The fall shook the house, but produced no other effect upon the fat man than to throw him into a violent fit of laughter, which made every part of him quiver like a pile of jelly.

As soon as Mr. Bibb succeeded in regaining his seat and composing himself, and quieting May, who had been much alarmed by the *flesh-quake* her mischievous brother had produced, Arthur entered, and the candles were lighted for tea. It chanced that there were no performances that evening at the little theatre where Monsieur Mallet played in the orchestra; and

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Ruth, ascertaining that he was in his room, invited him to join her tea-party: an invitation which was thankfully accepted. He was formally introduced to Mr. Bibb, whom he accosted in French:

"*Monsieur Beeb, je suis ravi de vous voir.*"

"He says he is happy to see you," interpreted Ruth.

"Thank you, Mounseer: the same to you," replied Mr. Bibb; and here the conversation dropped between the grocer and the musician. Indeed, as Ruth was the only one who could understand the latter, this was less a matter of choice than of necessity.

The spirit of joyousness is contagious, however, even when we are ignorant of the language in which it is vented; and, had any one stood at the door and listened to the glad voices within, he might have imagined that Champagne, and not black tea, was the beverage that was flowing.

Mr. Bibb, understanding that the Mounseer was a musical character, volunteered to entertain him with a song; and, while the poor Frenchman looked aghast at the discords that ensued, the fat man, with a supremely self-satisfied air, commenced:

"Father and I went down to camp,
Along with Captain Gooding,
And there we saw the girls and boys
As thick as—"

Before the singer could give utterance to the words "hasty pudding," with which the first stanza of our great national song concludes, the

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cup of tea that was raised half way to his lips fell from his hand, his lips quivered as if with an ague-fit, his eyes seemed starting from their sockets, and an expression of blank despair spread over all his features.

"*Ma foi!*" exclaimed Monsieur Mallet, "*I knew it would keel him—c'etait très horrible—de l'eau, ma chère! de l'eau fraiche! Some cold vater!*"

The Frenchman attributed the attack to what seemed to him the diabolical discords in which Mr. Bibb was indulging. Alas! there was a deeper, a more direful cause!

"He saw a hand they could not see,
Which beckon'd him away,
He heard a voice they could not hear,
Which said he must not stay."

In plain prose, the voice of Mrs. Bibb, coming up stairs, had suddenly stricken his ear, and, a moment afterward, she burst into the room with an aspect full of portentous meaning. She seemed thinner and smaller than ever; but her little pursed-up mouth, like the cloudy speck which, in tropical latitudes, holds the hurricane, was evidently keeping back the storm only that it might explode with the more terrific effect. Monsieur Mallet instinctively drew back his chair and dropped his head between his shoulders. Little May nestled against the breast of the poor victim of the impending tempest, as if to protect him by her feeble aid. Frank clinched his fists, and Ruth and Arthur looked on with silent concern.

"So! Mr. Bibb!" began the virago, drawing

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a long breath, placing her arms a-kimbo, and jerking her sharp face into his, so as to come very near hitting it: "So! Mr. Bibb, sir!" continued she, laying an ironical emphasis upon the last word, "this is the way in which you treat your lawful wedded wife—stealing away from her with your pockets full of cakes and loaf-sugar, to take tea with these ugly brats, the children of nobody knows who, and whom no decent people care about! So these are the *ward meetings* that you pretended you had to attend every night, you vile man! But I have found you out at last, and now, aren't you ashamed of yourself? Dare you ever hold up your head again? Can I ever forgive you? Ugh! you deserve to have your eyes torn out—you do!"

"*Sacre! ce n'est pas une femme — c'est un tigre!*" murmured Monsieur Mallet, unconsciously giving utterance to his amazement.

"None of your gibberish, you poor fiddling, frog-eating Frenchman!" exclaimed Mrs. Bibb, diverting her batteries for a moment from the main object of attack. The composer of sixty-five "grand oratorios" retreated towards the fireplace, and persuaded Frank to stand between him and the enemy.

"As for you, you forward little hussy, you," screamed the shrew, turning to our young housekeeper, "as for you—"

"Now, Ruth, it's your turn," interrupted Frank; "don't start like a two-year-old as the guns go off—eyes right, now—here it comes—bang!"

"Silence! you hateful, saucy, vile, insolent

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little wretch," said Mrs. Bibb, actually gasping with rage. "And you, you cruel man," added she, diverted by Frank's soldier-like skirmish from the charge upon Ruth, and returning to the attack upon her husband, "how dare you sit tamely by, and see your lawful wedded wife insulted by such a whipper-snapper as this? Why don't you speak, Mr. Bibb? Put down that odious brat, and speak to me!"

As she said this, she rudely pulled May by the arm from his knee, hurting the child so much in the act that it could not repress a cry of pain. The circumstance, slight as it was, seemed sufficient to produce an instantaneous change in the influence of Mrs. Bibb's presence upon her too submissive lord. He rose from his chair with as much dignity as was consistent with his corpulency, and, while his countenance assumed an air of grave decision, he said, "This course of conduct must stop here, Mrs. Bibb, or you and I can no longer live together. Until you can ask my forgiveness for the past, and promise to change your manner towards me entirely, I will not sleep under the same roof that covers you. You well know that I am in earnest, so act accordingly."

Had her husband been suddenly metamorphosed into a hippopotamus, Mrs. Bibb could not have been more confounded than she was by this unexampled and unlooked-for display on his part of spirit and determination. She looked for a full minute in his face, as if incapable of realizing that it was he who had spoken. As he did not quail before her glance,

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she at length seemed satisfied of the fact; but, like Napoleon at Elba, she could not at once forsake the hope of regaining her lost dominion. So, summoning her severest looks and her sharpest tones, she exclaimed, "Mr. Bibb! I command you to leave this place this very instant—this very instant, I say—and accompany me home. If you obey, I forgive you; if not—Come along this instant, sir! I command you! Do you dare—"

Alas for Mrs. Bibb! Her tones grew feebler and less imperious! She was even then upon her "field of Waterloo," the vanquished, not the vanquisher! Her husband, the Wellington of the day, stood firm as a rock. Not the shifting of a muscle indicated that his resolution was ebbing. With his left hand placed gently upon May's head, he stood pointing significantly with his right to the door. Humbled and in tears, Mrs. Bibb hesitated a moment, as if in doubt whether to renew the conflict or to ask pardon; and, finally, stamping her foot, she tossed herself out of the room and took her departure, muttering, "Oh, you shall repent this, sir—you shall repent this!"

"Courage, *mon ami!*" exclaimed Monsieur Mallet, jumping up as the door closed, and shrugging his shoulders, while a grin of admiration and delight irradiated his face. "*La victoire est pour vous! Bravo! Vous avez bien fait cela!*"

"Was it well done, eh?" replied Mr. Bibb, with an honest pride in his achievement.

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"What do *you* say, Frank? Couldn't have done it better yourself, eh?"

"It was first-rate!" said Frank, rubbing his hands.

Even little May, who had been weeping through fright, looked up, and began to laugh as she felt the genial return of pleasure and satisfaction to the bosoms of the rest of the party.

It was now proposed by Monsieur Mallet to adjourn to his room, and hear a grand medley, or *rifaccimento* of melodies, in honour of the triumph of his new friend. The invitation was gladly accepted; and the good-natured Frenchman entertained the party till the clock struck nine with a number of popular airs, admirably executed upon the piano-forte. The children then bade the two old men good-night, and retired to their beds, where, if the image of Mrs. Bibb mingled in their dreams, it did not prevent their enjoying a sweet and refreshing sleep.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

Concerning Ruth's history before the night of her first encounter with Stanford, I have said but little. Her mother was the daughter of a gentleman of large fortune, named Gordon, who resided in Philadelphia, and owned extensive coffee plantations in Cuba. She was one of three children, of whom all were girls. Unlike her sisters, she was beautiful and interesting; and being, in addition, the youngest, she was naturally the belle of the family. In a city distinguished for its lovely faces, few could compete in personal charms with May Gordon; and yet it was not her symmetrical shape, or the faultless contour of her features, which constituted the witchery of her presence: it was the soul that beamed through all—the ever-shifting expression, which gave to her countenance that "infinite variety," of which the gazer could never weary.

With such attributes, and the reputation of an heiress, it was not surprising that there should be numerous suiters for her hand. She reached her twentieth year, however, with a heart as free and unscathed as a young eagle's, who is taking his first flight towards the sun. But the hour of trial was approaching.

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The Gordons were a musical family, and it was the pride of the mother that the best private concerts in the city were had at her house. To compass this object of her ambition, it was often necessary to invite foreigners, who, however well versed they might be in the mysteries of *sol*, *fa*, *la*, quavers, demi-semi-quavers, crotchets, allegros, and adagios, were frequently adventurers of rather questionable credit: people, in short, whose vocal notes were more likely to prove current than their notes of hand. The inquiries she made in selecting the attendants at her parties were not, "Is he respectable? Is he a person fit to associate with my daughters?" but, "Can he sing Italian music? Can he accompany Isabella in the duet from 'Don Giovanni?' Does he play on any instrument?"

It chanced that among the English residents in Philadelphia was a young man named Loveday, the son of a curate of small means and lowly origin. Poor as he was, however, the father had managed to educate his boy at Eton, and to send him a few years afterward to the United States to seek his fortune.

Loveday had the manners and appearance of a gentleman, and was a most accomplished performer on the flute. He had not been in the city a week before he was invited, through the agency of a fellow-passenger in the ship in which he left England, to a musical party at Mrs. Gordon's, who, after hearing him execute a solo accompaniment on the flute in a style extremely acceptable to his hearers, gave him

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a standing invitation to the house on the evenings of Tuesday and Saturday. The curate's son was not backward in expressing his acknowledgments. His eyes had lighted on a face which had affected him as he had never been affected before; and was it vanity that led him to believe that May Gordon's glances had met his more than once, and *not* by accident?

The sequel has already been partly told. In spite of the indignant opposition of her parents, May Gordon consented to forsake home and friends, and the prospect of a large inheritance, to unite herself to him on whom she had lavished the wealth of her pure and disinterested affections. Loveday was young. He had but recently arrived in the country, and was full of hope. He soon found that the avenues to employment were more crowded than he had anticipated; and, after some unavailing attempts to obtain a profitable situation as a clerk, he resorted to the task of giving lessons on the flute for a subsistence. An affection of the chest soon drove him from this vocation. Having some taste for drawing, and a knowledge of the art of cutting designs on wood, he had then removed to New-York, and adopted the profession of an engraver, which he continued until a trouble in the eyes shut him out from all his resources for obtaining a livelihood.

Never, through all her vicissitudes and privations, had Mrs. Loveday been heard to utter a word of regret and repining at the step she had taken. On her husband's account, she bitterly

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lamented her father's inhumanity; but, in her dreariest moments of destitution, the thought of Loveday's attachment and gentleness—nay, his very misfortunes—threw a halo around her lot, which she would not have exchanged for all the glare and glitter of affluence and fashion. Her children claimed and received her tenderest care. Upon Ruth's early education she expended a degree of thought and labour such as few mothers, even the most prosperous, are wont to give. The qualities of the child's heart were first trained and expanded, and a consciousness of her spiritual nature, of its dignity and worth, its responsibilities and its destiny, was sedulously developed. The intellectual faculties were then exercised. Little accomplishments were imparted. A taste for reading, and for all mental gratifications of a blameless character, was cultivated with assiduity.

In the midst of her maternal offices, Mrs. Loveday was called upon, by the sure voice of death, to quit her fleshly tenement. With a soul purified by affliction, confident in its immortality, and in the efficacy of the Saviour's mediation, and overflowing with human love and tenderness, she bade her husband and children farewell, and passed the boundary of this present stage of being. But goodness, even on earth, can never wholly perish. It lives and generates in the hearts to which its sanative contagion has been imparted. Ruth afforded a beautiful instance of this encouraging truth. Every useful lesson, every generous example, every ennobling influence, which the mother's hand had

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ingrafted from her own bounteous store, grew and flourished in the daughter's heart as in a congenial soil. It seemed as if nothing which the voice of maternal love had communicated was forgotten or disregarded.

Five months had now elapsed since Stanford's departure. Spring, with its birds and blossoms, its gentle showers and sunny hours, had come. Ruth's plans, which were conceived with foresight and carried out with energy, seemed to result prosperously. Through a rigid obedience to the rules of health, her little family had escaped the myriad maladies which beset humanity.

By a frugal disposition of her means, she had managed not only to send Frank and May to school, but to purchase a goodly stock of cotton clothing, so that a daily change in the essential articles of attire next the skin might be effected. This arrangement necessarily involved a weekly bill for washing from Mrs. Bangs; but Ruth preferred the luxury of cleanliness to every other; and, so long as she did not overstep her income, she saw no good reason why she should not indulge in this species of extravagance, if extravagance it could be called. How far the remembrance of Stanford's parting advice may have influenced her, I will not undertake to say.

At school, Frank made a far more rapid progress than Ruth had anticipated. He had come to the conclusion that the best mode of escaping the rod was not to merit it, and in this he was successful, studying his lessons with care,

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and never incurring a penalty for inattention or bad deportment. In this creditable course he received daily encouragement from his sister, who hailed every new step that he made in knowledge with sincere delight. She gradually weaned him from his incipient taste for the society of rude, unpolished boys, and, by operating upon his ambition, induced him always to aim at a respectable career in life. It was with great difficulty that she overcame a habit he had formed of always attending upon the fire-engines when there was an alarm. For many weeks Frank held out steadfastly; but, on learning that there was a big dog in the city addicted to the same propensity, who, the moment the cry of "fire" was raised, ran to some engine-house to superintend and accompany the firemen, he resolved that he would set a good example to his brute imitator, and abandoned the practice.

Arthur still retained his fondness for books, and Dr. Remington was so well pleased with his fidelity and attention, that he lent him his advice and assistance in the pursuit of a valuable course of study. The hours which Arthur employed in sitting in the doctor's wagon at the doors of his patients were neither wasted nor misapplied. He went diligently through the Latin Grammar, and had made some inroads into "Ovid" by the time at which our narrative has arrived.

Nor were Ruth's musical studies neglected amid her multifarious avocations. Monsieur Mallet, though something of a "fanatic" in his

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art, was thoroughly educated in all its branches; and, becoming devotedly attached to his "little pupil," he took infinite pains in her instruction, and was, with reason, well satisfied with her progress. Ruth had a good natural ear for music, and a clear, flute-like voice, and she cultivated these faculties with her habitual perseverance and strength of will. The good Frenchman soon became justly proud of his pupil's proficiency.

It was Ruth's custom to attend church regularly, with her little family, every Sunday. They sat in the free seats, where they generally found a plenty of room. She had bought a hymn-book to take with her; and once, when a familiar air was played on the organ, she almost unconsciously joined in the singing of the choir. Far was it from her thoughts to attract any attention by the act. It was a spontaneous impulse, partly of devotion, and partly of musical feeling; but, as she sat down, she accidentally looked around, and all at once became conscious that the eyes of some ladies and gentlemen in an adjoining pew were earnestly fixed upon her. Poor Ruth at first felt as if she had been guilty of some terrible crime: an idea which her innocent heart speedily shook off. She resolved, however, to avoid giving such occasions for remark in future.

As she was leaving the church, hand in hand with Frank, one of the gentlemen whose attention she had excited came up, with the evident object of addressing her. Her heart beat high. "Now he is going to rebuke me for disturbing

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the choir!" thought she to herself. No such thing, my dear Ruth. The gentleman is Mr. Alison, one of the board of trustees of the church. He has been much pleased with your voice, and he wants you to sit in the singing-seats, and offers you for your musical services the sum of two dollars a week through the year!

Strange as it may seem, Ruth's first thought was to decline the offer, through a distrust of her own abilities to give satisfaction. It occurred to her, however, that she ought to consult Monsieur Mallet before rejecting so advantageous an arrangement, and she told Mr. Alison that she would call and give an answer to his proposition before the next Sabbath.

"Very well, my dear; you will find my address on this bit of pasteboard," said he, handing her his card.

Ruth communicated the circumstance to Monsieur Mallet, and, in accordance with his advice, and the promise of his instruction, she accepted Mr. Alison's offer, and the following Sunday made her appearance in the singing-seats, while May, Arthur, and Frank took up their positions where they could look directly in her face. She acquitted herself much to the satisfaction of all good judges in the congregation, and did justice to the preparatory drilling which had been bestowed upon her by her instructer. With what an honest pride did May and her two brothers hurry to the gallery door to take her hand after the service was over, and her trial had resulted in complete success! And with what satisfaction did Frank and Arthur

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drink in, and treasure up the complimentary remarks upon the new singer, which they had heard drop casually from this one and that among the departing audience!

June, the month of roses, had now arrived, when, on a clear, purple Saturday morning, the little family arose with the expectation of carrying into effect a long-projected plan for recreation and amusement. This momentous scheme was nothing less than an excursion of pleasure across the river to Hoboken. For weeks and months it had been anticipated and dreamed of, and at length there was a prospect that the bright vision would result in a still brighter reality. The orphans had read of green fields and waving forests, but beyond the little glimpses of woodland they could find in the Park, in St. John's Square, and the Battery, they had no definite idea of a rural scene. They had all their lives long been doomed to a city life, in the strictest sense of the phrase. They were city children, and all their associations were connected with brick walls, paved streets, and rattling carts. Ruth had once seen a humming-bird quaffing sweetness from the tube of a honeysuckle, which grew in the front yard of a mansion in the upper part of the city; and Frank, in his winter visit to Providence, had seen acres and acres of land covered with trees, and dotted here and there only with the habitations of men; but little knew they of that pomp and affluence of verdure with which Summer arrays our woods and fields; little dreamed they of the sweetness of a clover-field newly

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mown; of the melody of a wild bird's song, and the delicious breath of the early woodland flowers.

They had read of these things in prose and in verse, and now, for the first time, was the delightful hope of witnessing them to be realized. Is it wonderful that there should have been something intoxicating in the very anticipation?

Doctor Remington had, of his own accord, offered Arthur a holyday. At Frank's school there chanced to be a vacation of a week, so that he would be a free man for the occasion. May's school did not keep on Saturdays. As for Ruth herself, by stealing a half hour daily from that portion of time devoted to sleep during the two weeks before, she had richly earned the holyday to which they now looked forward.

Among the invited guests on this grand occasion were William Bangs and his cousin, little Lucy Marvell. Early on the morning assigned, they all breakfasted together in Ruth's room. A nice tin pail was then filled with materials for a dinner: bread and butter, some thin slices of cold salt beef, a parcel of buns, and a paper full of almonds and raisins, which had been contributed by Mr. Bibb on hearing of the projected excursion. Shawls, bonnets, and caps were then eagerly put on. Frank was at first disposed to wear his formidable old hat; but, upon the whole party's exclaiming against it, he contented himself with his "patent leather," as he was wont to call the cap that had been presented to him at the period of his visit to Providence.

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All being equipped, Ruth locked the door, and taking Lucy's hand, while William Bangs took that of May, and Frank and Arthur carried the tin pail by turns, they sallied forth into the street. It was that sweet hour just after sunrise, when the stillness and repose of night seem to be lingering in the air, though its darkness has fled. The sidewalks and paving-stones were yet moist, and the gray, narrow streets looked even fair and cheerful beneath the rosy light that was flushing the sky and streaming over the earth.

"Isn't it a first-rate morning, Ruth?" cried Frank.

"Ask me rather, Isn't it a beautiful one?" she replied.

"I say, Bill Bangs, were you ever in a steamboat?" asked Frank.

"I went to Brooklyn once in the ferry-boat," answered Bill.

"Crossing the river is nothing," continued Frank, with the air of a man who has seen the world. "You were never off Point Judith, were you?"

"I never heard of such a place."

"It is a good way out at sea. You pass it in going to Providence. Such fun as it was to see the people sea-sick as we were rounding it! But I wasn't sick at all. Mr. Lawrence told me I was a first-rate sailor."

"How high were the waves, Frank?" asked Lucy Marvell.

"About as high as the Astor House, sometimes, I should think," said Frank.

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"Merciful me! we sha'n't meet such high waves going to Hoboken, shall we?"

"Nonsense, Lucy! It is nothing at all going to Hoboken. We shall not be on the water more than fifteen minutes. But I guess, if you were to see Point Judith, it would frighten you."

"There have been greater travellers than you, Frank—for instance, Captain Cook and Captain Riley," said Ruth.

"Yes," replied Arthur; "but they merely fell into the hands of Otaheitans and Arabs. Now Frank, you know, had to encounter a gang of news-boys."

Finding that he was likely to be "quizzed," Frank changed the subject, and remarked that there were not many people in Broadway yet a while; to which Master Bangs replied, that the omnibuses didn't begin to run till seven o'clock.

Arriving at the head of Barclay-street, the little party at length reached the ferry between the city and Hoboken. Here a friendly altercation arose between Bill Bangs and Arthur Loveday as to who should pay the fare across. But Ruth settled the question by reminding Bill that he and Lucy were their guests for the day, and that it was contrary to all rule for him to bear any portion of the expense. This assurance proving satisfactory, Arthur was allowed to negotiate undisturbed with the toll-keeper for the passage of the whole party. I must not linger with them too long in their voyage across the river. They chanced to be the only passen-

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gers in the boat; and I doubt if it ever carried six happier beings.

Everything was fresh and novel in their eyes. The glittering bay—the ships moored at the wharves—a United States frigate at anchor off the Battery—Staten Island emerging through the purple mist in the distance—Long Island, with its villages and villas, stretching out towards the Narrows; and then the view up the river: the city, with its steeples and stately buildings sparkling in the sun, on one side—Hoboken, Weehawken, and the distant Palisades on the other—all seemed to them like enchantment.

But when they touched the longed-for shore, and, passing through the gateways and walks that lead to the "Elysian Fields," entered that beautiful strip of woodland, and stood beneath a canopy of leaves and waving branches, through which they could only see patches of bright blue sky, their delight knew no bounds.

"Look, Ruth! There's a bluebird!" exclaimed Frank, pointing to one of the topmost boughs of a young hickory-tree.

"And here's a blue flower!" cried Lucy Marvell. "Only look here, May Loveday! Isn't it pretty?"

"Hullo! There's a squirrel! There he goes! Look! Look! Up that oak-tree!" exclaimed William Bangs.

"Where? Where? I don't see him—yes I do—now don't say a word, while I find a stone," said Frank.

"Stop, Frank," interposed Ruth. "Why do

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you want to harm that merry little fellow in gray?"

"Well, it *is* wrong to kill him, isn't it, Ruth?" returned Frank, abandoning his search.

"To be sure it is. Do you not remember the lines by Coleridge which I read to you the other day from a newspaper?

"'God loveth him who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the good God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'"

"I should like it, though, consumedly, to have a squirrel in a cage," said Frank, shaking his head.

"That is a very silly desire, Frank. For my part, I could never bear to see either birds or squirrels shut up in a cage. Nor could I ever imagine what pleasure it could give people to confine three or four gold-fishes in a glass globe. I do not believe that the birds, the squirrels, and the fishes relish such treatment any more than you would."

"I see a bird's nest! By George, I must have that," cried Frank, as, throwing down his cap with an air of great excitement, he rushed towards the trunk of a tall chestnut-tree, and began climbing it nimbly.

"You will tumble, Frank!" said Arthur.

"No I will not," replied Frank, mounting to the nearest branch. "Here I am! Huzza!"

By dint of great exertion, and after several times hazarding his neck, Frank reached the coveted nest, which turned out to be old and dried up.

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"I thought that birds' nests always had eggs in them!" said he, as, vexed and disappointed, he threw down the worthless trophy.

"Let it teach you, Frank, to be always sure that your game is worth the getting before you risk your neck for it," said Arthur.

It was nearly half an hour before Frank could get safely down to the ground from the fork of the tree, and then he would not have succeeded had he not been aided and encouraged by Arthur and William.

"Now, girls and boys," cried Ruth, "now that Frank is safe, let us have a good game of hide and seek."

"Agreed!" exclaimed all concerned; and the "alleys green" of the forest were soon made to ring again with their laughter and their shouts.

After they had rested from this sport, they strolled in the direction of the river's edge, and visited the grotto, where a limpid spring has its source, and watched the steamboats as they sped along, lashing into furrows of foam the surface of the noble Hudson.

Time fled more rapidly than they could have conceived; and, as it drew near to one o'clock, Frank began to throw out some very significant hints as to the propriety of having dinner.

"Now, then," said Ruth, "let us see who will select the best spot for our pic-nic. What a sweet, balmy day it is! I see a place where we may spread our repast. Follow me!"

Ruth led the way towards a level, moss-grown rock, that overhung the river's bank, and from

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which a fine view of the surrounding scenery might be obtained. It was sufficiently shaded by a tall oak, that towered at one extremity, and there were knobs or cushions of earth around, upon which the party might sit or recline in comfort. The opinion was unanimous, that a better spot for their purpose could not be selected. There, then, was the tin pail deposited, while its contents were neatly spread upon a large clean napkin by Ruth.

"I tell you what, Ruth, I feel hungry," said Frank. "Are we all ready?"

"Stop a moment," she replied. "We surely cannot look around on this beautiful earth, and breathe this delicious air, and see these evidences of the bounty and goodness of our Father in heaven, without giving a few moments to thoughts of adoration and of gratitude. Let us, then, silently, but devoutly, offer up our thanks."

The suggestion did not fall upon cold or reluctant hearts. The children knelt in impressive silence for a full minute, until Ruth set the example of rising.

"Now I am sure," said she, looking round upon her little party with a smile, "we shall take our meal with spirits more cheerful than ever; and cheerfulness is better than all the sauces in the world to make a dinner relish. Do you not think so, William?"

"Somehow or other, I always think what you say is right," replied William.

"Then allow me to say that a piece of this salt beef between these slices of bread and butter will do you no harm."

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"Thank you, Ruth; my appetite doesn't need much coaxing. You are right again."

"Miss Lucy Marvell, permit me to help you to a sandwich. To you the same, Miss May Loveday. Arthur, shall I have the pleasure? Frank, can I not persuade you?"

"I tell you what, Miss Loveday, I don't require much persuasion. I feel hungry enough to relish a piece of old shoe."

"Well, Frank, before you seriously begin upon that beef, just take this bowl, and fill it at the fountain."

"I'll do it, Ruth; but if I meet any bullocks by the way, I won't be answerable for their lives."

Frank hastened to fulfil his sister's request, and in a few minutes returned with a large bowl full of clear cold water, into which they all dipped their mugs, as their thirst impelled them.

It was a memorable feast, under that big oak-tree, with the soft summer wind rustling the leaves, the river flashing in the pure sunlight, the perfume of wild flowers and forest shrubs filling the air! The repast was followed by a song or two from Ruth, and then the little party dispersed through the woods, to gather such blossoming trophies as they could find to bear home.

It was nearly five o'clock before they reached the ferry-boat to recross the river on their return to the city. One of the first persons they encountered on board was Mr. Bangs, William's father. In conversation with him was a young

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man of a handsome exterior, plainly but elegantly dressed in a black frock-coat, white pantaloons, and vest. He carried a riding whip; and in the forward part of the boat, tied to the railing, stood a glossy blood horse which belonged to him. He seemed to be discussing with Bangs the relative merit of certain horses, whose speed they had been testing at the race-course.

"Depend upon it, Mr. Dangleton, I am right," said Bangs, "in my opinion of that beast. He has ten times the speed and strength of Duane."

"I am disposed to agree with you, Bangs," replied the young man; "but, at the same time, I cannot help remembering how you misled me in regard to Holloway's Black Jane. There you missed it confoundedly. I lost fifteen hundred dollars through my foolish confidence in your judgment."

"But didn't I show my sincerity by losing too?" asked Bangs.

"Yes; but what consolation was that to me, Bangs, for the dwindling of my pocket-book?"

"I was right, after all, Mr. Dangleton. It was entirely that little rascal's fault who rode her, that she didn't win. I shall always believe that he was bribed to make her shy in the last heat."

"It may be so, Bangs. I have always esteemed you a good judge of horse-flesh, and will not discard you for making a mistake once."

"Thank you for your good opinion, Mr. Dangleton. We will make up our losses on the next race, and no mistake."

At this moment the eye of Mr. Bangs fell on

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his son, and, calling to him, he said, "How, now, you young rascal? How came you here? Who gave you permission to come?"

"I did up all my work yesterday, father," replied William; "and so, as Ruth Loveday and her brothers were going over to Hoboken to have a good time, mother consented to let me and Lucy go with them."

"So you came over with the Lovedays, did you?"

"Yes, father," replied William, trembling with the anticipation of a cuff in the ear.

At the first mention of the name "Loveday," the attention of the young man who had been conversing with Bangs was visibly excited; and on its repetition, he said, half musingly, "Loveday! Loveday! Was that the name, Bangs, I heard from your lips?"

"Yes; I was only speaking of the children who are sitting on the bench yonder. Their name is Loveday."

"Children! Loveday! This way a moment, Bangs."

Glad to be let off without a blow, William hurried back to his friends; and Mr. Dangleton, taking Bangs aside, remained with him a few minutes in earnest conversation, during which the former was so interested as to allow a cigar which he had lighted to drop unnoticed from his fingers. The communications of Bangs, whatever they were, seemed to astonish, and, at the same time, to gratify the young man. In a state of nervous excitement, as if hardly knowing what he was about, he took the arm of his

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vulgar companion, and paced the deck with him, directing piercing glances at Ruth: a condescension at which Bangs was evidently amazed, for Mr. Dangleton had never before treated him as an equal.

The gaze of the young man became so constant and intent, that Ruth at length was embarrassed, and turned away, pointing out some object of interest on the water to Lucy Marvell. Before she could resume her former position, she heard Bangs, in a tone of voice unusually respectful, say, "Miss Ruth, here is a gentleman who wishes to speak with you. Let me make you acquainted with Mr. Dangleton."

Ruth rose, bent her head slightly, and, lifting her eyes, turned a look of inquiry upon the young man.

Bowing gracefully, Mr. Dangleton took her hand. She withdrew it in an instant. Her dark eyes flashed, and the rosy blood streamed up her neck and face to her forehead.

For a moment the handsome stranger was silenced, struck partly with confusion at her manner, and partly with admiration at her charms. Quickly recovering his self-composure and promptitude of address, he said, in a sweet, low, and respectful tone, and with a look of winning softness, "Do not think me impertinent, young miss, in thus intruding myself upon your acquaintance. But, having accidentally heard from Bangs—I employ Bangs to buy my horses," added he, as he read a passing expression of distrust in Ruth's features—"Hearing from Bangs, I say, the story of your orphan

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position—your industry and good management —your judicious care of your brothers and sister—I became, and very naturally, you must admit, so much interested, that I could not forego the opportunity of expressing my approbation of your conduct, and, at the same time, of inquiring if there is nothing I could do for yourself or your brothers, in behalf of so much worth, and, I may add," continued he, lowering his voice, "so much loveliness."

The last word was an unfortunate one for Dangleton, for it immediately put Ruth upon her guard; and she coldly replied, "I thank you, sir, for your offered kindness, but can assure you that we do not need it. This very holyday excursion, from which we are just returning, is a proof."

"True. I did not imagine that you required any charitable aid; but I knew that a man in my circumstances has it often in his power, by a word of recommendation, to obtain a good place in a store, for instance, for a lad in whose welfare he may chance to take an interest. Believe me, I was anxious to avoid giving you offence."

"You have given none," said Ruth, looking him calmly in the face.

"I rejoice to have your assurance that it is so," resumed the young man, in his blandest tones. "You will at least leave me the satisfaction of knowing that, in case I should hear of any situation which would be an advantageous one for one of your brothers, I may call and inform you respecting it? Surely you will not say nay to this?"

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"Neither of my brothers," replied Ruth, "at present desires any change of situation. One is at school, and the other pursuing his studies in a manner the most agreeable to him."

Mr. Dangleton bit his lip, and, turning away, muttered to himself, "She is shy as a bird—beautiful, however, and well worth the snaring. What will Mr. Dangleton senior say to this discovery? For the present, the secret is mine, and I'll hold on to it. How fortunate! It *can* be accomplished, of course—nay, it must and shall."

What the young man's reflections had been, it was impossible to judge from his face, as, again approaching Ruth, he said, with an air in which benignity and respect seemed mingled, "We must part friends—that I insist upon, Miss Ruth; for, believe me, I had no other feeling than one of kindness towards you and yours in addressing you."

"I do not doubt you," said Ruth, her features lighting up with a smile. "I have no disposition to quarrel."

"Your hand upon it!" exclaimed the young man, gayly, at the same time extending his hand.

Ruth frankly gave hers in return, and bade Mr. Dangleton "good-day."

The boat touched the wharf—the bell was rung—the drawbridge lowered—and the children, jumping on shore with their bundles of wild-flowers, fern, and blossoming boughs, proceeded up Barclay-street, talking, laughing, and reminding one another over and over again of

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the beautiful sights they had seen and the joys they had tasted.

Mr. Dangleton, before quitting the boat, was seen to stop five minutes, and enter into an earnest conversation with Bangs; then mounting his horse, he followed the Lovedays at a slow pace as far as Broadway, when he waved his hand in token of farewell to Ruth, and, turning off in the direction of the Battery, proceeded on his course at a fast trot.

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CHAPTER IX.

A GOLDEN SCHEME.

THE tenour of our narrative now leads us to an office in the vicinity of Wall-street, occupied by Mr. Dangleton senior, attorney and counsellor at law. The room is plentifully hung around with maps of lands in the market, plans of never-to-be-finished railroads, advertisements of newly-formed companies, and such like indications of a speculating mania on the part of the occupant. On the shelf over the fireplace are arranged specimens of granite, coal, marble, and lead, all of which are from mines worked by companies, in which he is an important shareholder. A meager library of law-books, upon shelves between two windows, appears to be retained for show rather than for use.

The inmate of this apartment was a speculating lawyer in times when even men of sense and integrity were frequently infected with what may now be justly termed a rage for stock-gambling. He had launched daringly into operations, in which tens of thousands might be made or sunk by slight variations in the money-market. For months he had daily risen, not knowing whether the night would find him a bankrupt or a man of wealth. Lat-

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terly, however, fortune had been rather chary of her favours, as may be inferred from the conversation that ensued when, the Monday morning after the events recorded in the preceding chapter, Mr. Dangleton junior entered his father's office.

"Well, Ned," said the lawyer, who was engaged in penning a prospectus for the "Hagawoocheepoochee Land Company," with a capital of two millions, "well, Ned, what has sent you down here so early this morning? The old story, I suppose, eh? You have come to financier? You want money, eh?"

"Yes, father, that is a want from which I am very seldom free. Your check for a thousand dollars, or even half that sum, would gratify me beyond expression just at this moment."

"Ned, I am afraid you gamble."

"To be sure I do, but then it is on a small scale—nothing like that you go upon."

"What do you mean, scapegrace?"

"I see, sir, you are disposed to be merry. We will change the subject, if it offends you."

"Look you, Ned, you must absolutely retrench your expenses. It is really impossible for me to supply your extravagances any longer."

"Extravagances, sir!"

"Ay, extravagances, sir! By which I mean, keeping three or four horses, giving expensive dinners at Delmonico's, sending presents of jewelry to every pretty actress that comes along—in short, living the life of a mere idler and man of fashion."

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"May I inquire, sir, what is your opinion of the new opera?"

"Zounds! Ned, are you trying to provoke me into a passion?"

"By no means. I would not have you get into a passion on any account, so soon after breakfast. It is a very vulgar sort of excitement, getting into a passion—and disturbs the digestive organs."

"Be serious, Ned, for five minutes, and hear what I have to say. While the tide was in my favour, you know how freely I gave from my abundant means. But let me assure you that a great revolution in fiscal matters has just commenced. All those stocks, which I could have sold out a month since at a handsome advance, realizing thereby a fortune, are now below par. Money is hard to be got at two per cent. a month, and my anxieties are every day increasing. Between you and myself, I am tottering on the very verge of bankruptcy, and I suspect that a good many of my neighbours are in the same predicament."

"I believe you, father—upon my word, I do. But what of that? There are ways and means enough for raising the wind in this world, if a man only has his wits about him:

"'I know a bank whereon the wild thyme grows!'"

"I wish, Ned, you knew a bank that would discount my note for twenty thousand dollars."

"Good! What if I were to say that I may have the ability of giving you that little accom-

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modation myself in the course of a week or two?"

"I should say, Ned, that you were a cleverer fellow than I ever took you to be."

"I have a scheme—"

"Oh, if it's a scheme, I'll none of it. I'm sick of scheming."

"But this is one that requires no investment save a little agreeable impudence; a sort of—you understand."

"Oh, if impudence is all that it requires, I will take any bet on your success."

"The compliment is, of course, reflected on my instructer," said Ned, bowing with mock gravity.

"But, pray, what may this great scheme of yours be, Ned?" asked Mr. Dangleton, in a tone half careless and half curious.

"Have I not always understood you to say," resumed the young man, "that the name of the married sister of your late wife, my mother-in-law, to the offspring of which sister a very peculiar interest just at this moment attaches, was Loveday?"

"To be sure it was. The father's name was Arthur Loveday. He married May Gordon against the consent of her parents. They cast her off, and refused to see her or her children. She died, but whether he and the children are living or dead—in Europe or America—nobody has been able, as yet, to find out."

"You, my dear father, a widower at the time with four children, including myself, my amiable brother and sisters, married, as I un-

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derstand it, a sister of May Gordon, Isabella, who, much to your chagrin, died before her father, and without offspring."

"You are right. It was very inconsiderate of her to disappoint me so vexatiously. Dick Fortescue married the other daughter, Harriet, who also died without offspring. Mrs. Gordon, the mother, soon followed; and, finally, old Gordon himself was found one afternoon lifeless in his chair; and, deplorable to relate, he died intestate. The consequence has been, that neither Fortescue nor myself has ever derived the slightest advantage from the alliance. Not a penny can we ever receive from the estate. It must all go to Loveday's children, if they can ever be found, which seems to be doubtful."

"How large an estate did the old man leave?"

"It would be a capital speculation to buy it up from the heirs for a million of dollars. The coffee plantations in Cuba are alone worth that sum."

"You enchant me, my dear father!" exclaimed Ned, starting from his chair, and rubbing his hands with great glee.

"Hey! What! I cannot for the life of me see how this concerns you, Ned."

"A million divided among four will leave two hundred and fifty thousand apiece. I think I could get along on that. Yes, it will do!"

"I see it!" exclaimed Mr. Dangleton senior. "You have made a discovery, Ned. You have found out the whereabouts of these Lovedays. They are in ignorance of their good fortune. There is a girl among them. You think you

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can marry her; you can—you shall! Huzza! Am I not right, Ned? Isn't this your grand scheme?"

"And what would you say if it were?"

"Why, that it was worth all the bubble speculations that were ever engendered in the brain of a Wall-street broker. Bravo, Ned! Let me hear all about it. Where did you pick up this precious piece of information?"

Ned hesitated a moment as to whether he should communicate freely with his father in regard to his discovery. But, remembering that the latter's interests were vitally involved in the success of his matrimonial scheme, and that, as a lawyer, he might materially aid him by his advice and his pecuniary loans, he resolved to lay the whole matter before him, as if he were merely acting under the impulse of filial confidence and candour.

"Do you remember," said the young man, "a fellow named Bangs, whom I sent to you three or four months since, to help him out of a lawsuit he had got into, in an affair of a lamed horse?"

"A ruffianly, reckless-looking fellow, was he not? I remember him well. I have an unpaid charge against him in my books."

"So much the better. Well, as I was returning from Hoboken yesterday afternoon in the boat with Bangs, I accidentally heard him apply the name *Loveday* to some children who were on board."

"Is it possible? This is excellent, Ned. Go on."

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"You well know what a spell that name has been to us ever since old Gordon's death. You will not, therefore, be surprised that I started on hearing it, and, as I suspect, turned a little pale. Taking Bangs aside, I questioned him rapidly in regard to those to whom he had applied the interesting dissyllable. In two minutes I fully satisfied myself that I stood in the presence of the legitimate heirs of old Gordon, your late father-in-law!"

"But the proofs, Ned—give me the proofs."

"The name is an unusual one, you will grant. That is but a slight circumstance, however, in the scale. Another is, that the children, four in number, are orphans, living together in an humble, though not an entirely destitute condition. I have understood from you that Loveday, whom, from the information I yesterday gathered, I may now venture to call *the late Mr. Loveday*, at one time followed the calling of an engraver on wood. Now I learned from Bangs that the eldest child, who is a girl, actually supports the little family by practising the same art."

"That is a strong point, Ned—I may almost say, a conclusive one," exclaimed Mr. Dangleton, rising from his chair and pacing the room.

"The strongest presumptive evidence is to come. You remember the exquisite engraving in an English annual, called *The Bijou*, which you told me was copied from a portrait of May Gordon, taken a year or two before her marriage?"

"I remember it well. The painting was by

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Stuart Newton, who took a copy of it with him to England, where it was engraved as a fancy picture. The likeness was one of the best I ever saw. It was May Gordon herself, reflected on canvass."

"It will answer quite as well for a likeness of the daughter. I was at once startled by the resemblance. It is perfect."

"You have said enough, Ned, to convince me that your conclusions in regard to these children are just. How old should you take the girl to be?"

"About fifteen; at any rate, some months past the age when a marriage is illegal."

"I am glad to see you have a strict eye to business, Ned. Is the maiden pretty?"

"Beautiful exceedingly! with an erect, peerless shape, and a face of rare loveliness and expression. I really think it would not cost me a very great effort to work myself into the belief that I was in love with her."

"Wait a while till she is in love with you, and then I shall have no particular objection to your indulging in any little reciprocities of affection. He who wishes to win a woman, should never be the first to fall in love; for she has him then at an advantage; and he is so completely stupefied and blinded, that he cannot carry out his tactics with any sort of discretion."

"I flatter myself that I have had some little experience already in the art, my dear father," said Ned, pulling up one side of his shirt collar, and loosening his neck from the rigid embrace of his cravat.

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"By-the-way, have you ascertained where the children live?" asked the lawyer.

"Could anything be more fortunate?" returned the young man. "They occupy the attic story in the house of the fellow Bangs."

"Good again! very good! How many of them did you say there were?"

"Four: two girls and two boys."

"Excellent! Why can we not manage to transfer the whole property to our family, should you marry the elder girl? The other one can be easily handed over to your brother Tom; and as for the two boys, your sisters Susan and Caroline are not my daughters if they cannot entrap them. All this can be effected beyond a doubt, so you will contrive, Ned, to become the husband of the eldest of these orphans. And what is to prevent you? A handsome young fellow, not yet twenty-one, with a smooth tongue and a winning manner—thoroughly at home in the study of that extensive volume, a woman's heart—bold, adroit, self-possessed, and with all your time at your disposal—opportunities the most propitious imaginable ready made to your hands—you, I say, backed by all these advantages, and with the appearance and reputation, if not the reality, of wealth, make an honourable proposal of marriage to a young, simple-minded, uneducated girl, whose lot has been, and, so far as she knows, promises always to be, one of labour and penury! The result seems to me natural—inevitable. The idea of failure, my dear Ned, is absurd. If you cannot win her, under such circumstances, you will be a discredit to the race of Dangletons"

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"I must confess that the odds are greatly in my favour; but let me assure you that the girl is very far from being the simple, silly individual, you would figure to yourself."

"If she be sensible, so much the less danger will there be of her rejecting you; for she will appreciate your talents, and recognise the advantages you offer in the alliance."

"I really believe you are sincere, my dear sir, and so, I thank you for the compliment. We must, of course, be exceedingly wary and quiet in this business."

"Oh, dark and still as a subterranean pool! You must not breathe a syllable about it to another human being."

"If I consent to that restriction, my dear father, I shall be under the necessity of asking you for the trifling loan to which I have before alluded."

"Humph!" exclaimed the lawyer, nervously shaking his watch-chain; "will not three hundred dollars answer your purpose?"

"I am sorry to say, sir, that it will not. I cannot get along with any sum less than a thousand."

"It is a heavy drain upon me, Ned, just at this moment; but, of course, you look forward to arranging this affair of the marriage in a week's time?"

"Most decidedly I do. I think I may promise to have the articles signed and sealed before Wednesday week."

"You will let me have the fingering of some of the fat dividends, then, you dog, eh?"

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"To be sure I will. The dollars shall fly like sands from under my horse's feet at Rockaway. You shall not find me a niggard; no, Ned Dangleton shall never be called by that name."

"Here is a check on the Manhattan Bank for the amount. Use it discreetly, Ned. Let it all be devoted to the forwarding of the great scheme. Every consideration must give way to that."

"To be sure it must. I have an appointment with Bangs this very afternoon. I shall barely have time to get this check cashed before the bank closes; so good-day."

"Success to your wooing, Ned. Remember that delays are dangerous. Like Cæsar, you must go, see, and conquer."

"Ay. If attempted at all, the scheme *must* be accomplished. It would be a pretty story to tell in Washington Place, that Ned Dangleton had been rejected by a poor girl, who got her living by manual labour. Pshaw! The project cannot fail. It is ridiculous to admit even the possibility of failure."

"That is right, my boy! The Napoleon tactics are the best in love as well as in war. A resolute will sweeps all obstacles from its path. What must it do, then, when there are no obstacles in the way?"

"I fix this day fortnight for my wedding!" exclaimed Ned, putting on his hat. "And then, hurrah for the coffee plantations! Adieu!"

"He is his father's own son!" said Mr. Dangleton, smiling, as the door closed.

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CHAPTER X.

HOW SHALL IT BE MANAGED?

As Monsieur Mallet sat in his room, arranging some music, the day after the interview between Mr. Edward Dangleton and his exemplary parent, a startling knock at his door caused him to lift his eyes and call out "*Entrez!*"

The individual who entered, in reply to this laconic exclamation, was a young and handsome man, fashionably dressed, who approached with an air and attitude of profound respect, and said in French, "Have I the honour of addressing the celebrated artist, Monsieur Mallet?"

"I am Monsieur Mallet," answered the poor musician, in his native tongue, somewhat taken by surprise at the complimentary epithet which had been prefixed to his humble name.

"Then pardon my presumption in calling to pay my homage without the ceremony of an introduction," said the stranger, presenting his card.

Monsieur Mallet, without glancing at the name, replied, with formal courtesy, "I am always happy to make the acquaintance of persons who appreciate the beautiful art to which my whole life has been devoted."

"Ah, sir, you may well call it a beautiful art, and worthy the devotion of a life, were the period of life fifty times as protracted as it is."

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The Frenchman's eyes sparkled with animation as he replied, "You are an artist yourself —a vocalist, perhaps; or can it be that you are the great master—the wonderful performer on the piano-forte—Thalberg himself? I have heard that he is about your age; and there has been a report in the newspapers that he intended visiting the United States."

"Alas! I am not Thalberg, as you can see by a glance at my card."

"Excuse my forgetfulness," said Monsieur Mallet, as, arranging his spectacles, he read the name "*Edward Dangleton.*"

"I heard one of your oratorios," continued the young man, "performed last winter at Prague, where I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with your friend and admirer, the Herr Von Steinbach."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the unsuspecting Frenchman, starting from his seat. "You know Von Steinbach! You have seen him! you have talked with him of me—of my oratorios—of —Oh! my dear friend, permit me to embrace you!"

Drawing forth a white cambric pocket-handkerchief, and shaking from it an odour of *eau de Cologne*, Mr. Dangleton, in a very tragic manner, covered his eyes, and so received the embrace of the enthusiastic Frenchman.

"Excuse this emotion," whimpered Ned; "but—but—I cannot help it."

"My dear friend!" exclaimed the poor musician, whose eyes were suffused with tears.

"Von Steinbach prepared me for this," said

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the young man, at length, in broken accents. "He told me that you would be rejoiced to see any one whom he had taken by the hand, and called his friend."

"Ah! he was not mistaken! It is a very great pleasure to see you. But why," said Monsieur Mallet, as if an idea had suddenly struck him, "why did you not bring letters from Von Steinbach?"

"There you remind me of my great misfortune," said Dangleton, with a melancholy shake of the head. "I was a passenger in that unlucky ship, the *Ville de Bordeaux*, which was obliged to put into Bermuda to recruit her stores. In undertaking to remove my trunk to the shore, the boat in which it was carried was swamped, and two of the oarsmen lost their lives!"

"Ah! the poor oarsmen!" sighed Monsieur Mallet.

"In that trunk, sir, now tossed like a thing of no value on the sands at the bottom of the great Atlantic—in that trunk were my letters from Von Steinbach to yourself; a roll of music, and some copies of the *Allegmeine Zeitung*, which he had commissioned me to—"

"It affects you too much, my dear young friend," said the sympathizing Frenchman. "Do not let me open your wounds afresh by asking you to relate more concerning your loss. But tell me, did you leave Von Steinbach well? I have not heard from him for more than two years."

"He had a return of his gout just before I quitted Prague; otherwise he was in good health."

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"Poor fellow! In his last letter he wrote me that he was going to try the celebrated water-cure administered by Priesnitz of Græfenberg. It will gratify you, perhaps, to read what he says. I will get the letter," continued the Frenchman, going towards an old, unlocked portfolio.

"Not now—not now," exclaimed Dangleton, with some trepidation in his manner, and glancing nervously at the portfolio. "The water did him some good, but did not afford complete relief. Let me tell you about the oratorio."

"Ah, yes, the oratorio. It was the 'Birth of Chaos,' I suppose?"

"The same; and Von Steinbach declared that it had never been so well performed in Prague since you superintended the production of it in 1825."

"I thought it would never be played there again," said Monsieur Mallet; "for it required all the violins in the city to do it justice. Nobody would come to hear it after the second night. Indeed, an objection which I had not contemplated was soon made evident. The musicians took up so much room in the great hall, that there were no seats for the public."

"But to the artists and amateurs who could join in the execution, what a delightful treat it was! Ah! Monsieur Mallet, I can say with Von Steinbach, that Beethoven himself never composed such a work!"

To this somewhat equivocal compliment, the "Mounseer" replied by silently pressing his new friend's hand.

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"Tell me, sir," said Dangleton, after a few more assurances of his admiration, "is it your habit, at any time, to give instruction in music?"

"I have had some pupils, but, because I could not always be punctual in attending them, they have left me. Very well! I have the more time to devote to my grand compositions," said Monsieur Mallet, shrugging his shoulders.*

"But have you no pupils whatever at present?"

"None at all!"

"Indeed?"

"Stay! I have forgotten. Yes, I have one little pupil—one sweet little pupil."

"What is her name?"

"Ruth Loveday."

"And does it not take up much of your time, going to give her lessons?"

"Oh, no! She comes to *me*. It is very convenient. She lives in this house. Ah! very charming is Ruth! and she learns so fast, that it is a pleasure, and not a task, to instruct her."

"I am glad to hear that you do not object to giving lessons. My sister, Mrs. Blazonby, a widow lady who resides in Broome-street, having heard me speak of you, is extremely desirous of engaging you as her musical instructer. I am sure you will be charmed with her, my dear Monsieur Mallet. She will not tie you down to particular hours. You can come when you please, and go when you please, and charge

* It will be remembered that the whole of this conversation was in French, which I have translated for the benefit of such of my readers as do not understand the language.

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what you please; for Mrs. Blazonby has a proper idea of the remuneration that should be awarded to excellence in art."

"I shall be proud to have madame, your sister, for my pupil," replied Monsieur Mallet, well pleased at the prospect of finding such a patroness.

"And now," continued Mr. Dangleton, with that suavity of manner which he could so gracefully employ, "will it be asking too great a favour if I propose that you should permit me to hear the little pupil, of whom you speak, play a few tunes? I would like to be able to give Mrs. Blazonby some idea as to your style."

"Certainly you shall hear my little pupil—that is, if she is in the house. I will call her in one moment."

"Stay!" said Dangleton. "Lest she should be shy of me as a stranger, it will be well for you to introduce me as your particular friend."

"Von Steinbach's particular friend is also mine. Your caution is unnecessary," replied the Frenchman.

"A thousand thanks for your kindness!"

"I shall be back in two minutes. I have only to go up stairs."

As soon as Monsieur Mallet had quitted the room, Mr. Edward Dangleton hastily drew from his pocket a bundle of old letters, and thrust them into the portfolio, to which I have already directed the reader's attention. As he did so, he muttered to himself, "That was a lucky idea of Bangs's, getting hold of these letters! Twenty dollars was good pay, however, for the

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job. Thanks to the Herr Von Steinbach, and to my own serene assurance, I am now fully established in the old fiddler's good graces. Thus far we run before the wind. Hush! He is coming down stairs with his '*petite ecolière.*' Now, Ned, summon all your impudence—all your power of fascination. The critical moment is at hand."

The music-master entered the room, leading Ruth, who had cheerfully quitted her task for his gratification.

"This gentleman, Ruth," said he, addressing her in French, as his constant habit now was, "is Mr. Edward Dangleton. You will be pleased to play before him, will you not, when I tell you he is a particular friend of mine?"

Ruth courtesied modestly, and looking up, said she should always be glad to oblige Monsieur Mallet and all his friends.

"She neither seems to recognise me, nor to heed my name!" thought Ned. "A confounded bad sign!"

Then taking her hand, he led her to the piano, and said, "I perceive you do not recognise me, Miss Ruth; and yet we have met and spoken before to-day."

"Oh, yes; coming from Hoboken the other afternoon in the boat: I remember you now," replied Ruth.

"Hang me if she hasn't all the *nonchalance* of a belle of five years' standing!" said Dangleton to himself.

"What will you be pleased to have me play, Monsieur Mallet?" asked Ruth, running her

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fingers over the keys of the piano, without the apparent consciousness of any one's presence but her instructer's.

"Let me hear you try some of the airs from Zampa which you have been studying."

Placing the notes before her, she obeyed; and executed some of the choicest portions of Herold's beautiful opera with an ease and elegance of touch, and a degree of precision, at which the music-master himself was surprised.

"Excellent! Admirable!" exclaimed Dangleton; and a torrent of praise flowed from his lips, all of which seemed to be received by Ruth as a matter of course, and to affect her neither one way nor the other.

"Confound her!" muttered the young man. "This will never do. I shall never make any progress at this rate."

"What think you of my little pupil, ha?" exclaimed Monsieur Mallet, rubbing his hands. "It is hardly six months since she took her first lesson in music."

"She plays, indeed, with exceeding grace and spirit," replied Dangleton. "Mrs. Blazonby would, I am sure, be charmed with her performance."

Alas! young man, what hideous thought is casting its dark shadow before in your busy brain?

Ruth rose to quit the room, but she was intercepted near the door by Dangleton, who said, "You will certainly permit me to make you some return for the pleasure you have afforded me. As a slight token of my admiration of

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your proficiency, may I not present you with a volume of new music?"

"I thank you, but must decline it. If you have presents to make, it will gratify me, far more than receiving them myself, to have you give them to my good instructer here. He has more music now in his portfolios than I could learn in a lifetime."

"A book, then, or some little trinket—this ring, for instance," continued the young man, producing a beautiful diamond; "you will not refuse this ring? It will just fit your middle finger."

As he spoke thus, he attempted to take her hand. Ruth drew it back, and said, "Indeed I cannot see how I have any claim upon your generosity. But let me look at the ring."

He eagerly placed it in her hand. She examined it a moment, while a mischievous smile played about her lips; and then putting it on the old Frenchman's little finger, she remarked, "If you seriously think you are under any obligation of gratitude for the entertainment you have had, it is due to Monsieur Mallet, and not to me. The ring fits him, you see, exactly."

"For your sake, then," cried Dangleton, biting his lips, "it shall be his."

"I will admit no such condition. It would detract from the grace of the gift," replied Ruth.

The crimson sprang to the young man's cheeks. He had address enough, however, to force a smile, and to say, "As you will. Nay, keep it, Monsieur Mallet; if not for the sake

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of Miss Ruth, for the sake of our dear mutual friend, Von Steinbach."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear Mr. Edward Dangleton," replied the Frenchman, moving the diamond so that it glistened vividly in the light.

"Good-morning!" said Ruth; and she glided gracefully out of the room.

"Still foiled and foiled, and by a mere girl!" muttered Dangleton.

"Did you speak?" asked Monsieur Mallet.

"I was wondering at her proficiency under your instruction, my dear sir," replied Dangleton, shaking the cloud from his brow, and taking the old man's hand with great cordiality of manner. "I will bring word to you some day this week, Monsieur Mallet, as to my sister's wishes. Of course you will consider yourself engaged as her instructer, and, by way of a retaining fee, please credit her for these ten dollars."

It was long since the poor Frenchman had been in possession of so much money at a time, and, as he received it, he expressed his acknowledgments with grateful and sincere emotion.

"I think you said that your little pupil, Ruth, lived here in the same house with you," observed Dangleton, carelessly, putting on his gloves, and moving towards the door.

"Yes; she occupies the rooms in the attic."

"Well, good-by, Monsieur Mallet. *Au revoir!* We shall meet again."

Dangleton quitted the apartment, thrusting back the old Frenchman, who would have accompanied him with ten thousand bows to the street.

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"No, Monsieur Mallet—no farther, I must insist—the air is a little chilly—you will take cold;" and the young man finally succeeded in shutting the door upon him.

At the head of the stairs, Dangleton leaned upon the banister, and summoned his thoughts to what he would have called a "council of war." He remained nearly five minutes without stirring, and then began slowly to descend. Suddenly checking his steps, however, and with compressed lips, shaking his head up and down, as if a felicitous idea had entered it all at once, he said to himself, "I have it! Why the deuse did I not think of that before? It is a sure card, and shall be played at once."

He remounted the stairs, with a firm step ascended the flight which led to the apartments of the young Lovedays, and knocked at the nearest door. It was opened by Ruth, who did not disguise an expression of astonishment at seeing him.

"I have an important communication to make to you, Ruth," said he, entering the room.

May was seated near the window, on her little bench, busy with a slate and pencil. Ruth placed a chair for her visiter, and stood with folded hands, waiting for him to speak.

"And this is sister May, is it not?" asked Dangleton, stooping, and parting the wavy curls from the child's forehead, and imprinting upon it a kiss.

May looked up with a confiding smile, and Ruth somewhat coldly replied, "Yes, sir; that is the little girl's name."

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Dangleton approached the elder sister, and, respectfully lowering his eyes to the hat which he held in his hand, said, "You have wondered, Ruth, and are wondering still, unless your wonder is already changed to distrust, why I, a young man of fashionable family, rich and gay, should seem interested in one like you. You instinctively suspect my motives, and I cannot complain at your doing so; but when I tell you the cause of my interest, I am sure your feelings will be changed, and that you will regard me with eyes of confidence, if not of affection."

"Go on, sir," said Ruth, looking him steadily in the eye.

"Know, then, Ruth Loveday, that it is on your mother's account, with whose family I am nearly connected, that—"

Ruth drew a long breath, and, while the tears leaped to her eyes, she placed both her hands in his, and cried, "Enough! enough, sir! Forgive my coldness! Had you told me this before, you should have had a far different greeting. But tell me, when and where did you know my mother, and how did you discover my relationship to her?"

"I cannot say that I have a distinct recollection of her myself, though, when quite a boy, I must have been in her society. Often, however, have I heard my father speak of beautiful May Gordon, and her runaway match with young Loveday."

"Gordon! May Gordon! Was that her name?" inquired Ruth, earnestly.

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"How? Is it possible? Can it be, then, that you did not know—"

Dangleton checked himself suddenly. He saw that he had made a great mistake, and rapidly revolved a variety of plans for retrieving it.

"So!" thought he, "she has remained in ignorance of the name of her mother's family! This accounts for the fact that the claims of these orphans to the estate have remained dormant. How unfortunate that it should have slipped from my tongue!"

"For good reasons," said Ruth, "my grandfather's name was never a familiar one among us. It is a satisfaction, however, to know what it was."

"I was in error!" cried Dangleton, in reply. "Gordon was the name of a different person altogether. The name of your maternal grandfather was Harrowby—Richard Harrowby, of Charleston, South Carolina."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ruth, with a scrutinizing glance at her informer.

Dangleton did not blench, and suspicion was not aroused.

"But do you judge from my name alone that I am the daughter of her of whom you speak?" inquired Ruth.

"Partly from that, but chiefly and incontestably from your resemblance to a portrait of your mother, taken in her girlhood."

"A portrait of my mother! Oh! where is it? Who has it? Can you show it me? May I not see it? If you knew how I have loved

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her—how I love her still, you would not wonder at my strong desire to see—to possess her likeness."

"The portrait is in my possession, and it will give me sincere gratification to place it in yours."

"Will you—will you give it to me? Oh! that will be a gift indeed! Thank you, sir! thank you! I cannot express my thanks."

"Your mother, Ruth, must have been exceedingly beautiful!"

"I well remember her features. I can tell at once if the likeness be true."

"It is remarkable for its fidelity: so says my father, who knew the original well."

"Did he know her, indeed? How I would love to talk with him about her!"

"You shall do so, Ruth. I have spoken with him concerning you, and he urgently desires to meet and embrace the children of his old and dear friend."

"When will you let me have the portrait?"

"To-morrow. I will bring it to you myself."

After this prosperous commencement, Dangleton adroitly led on the conversation to such topics as were the most suitable to Ruth's tastes and feelings. He was well aware that the best way to make a person pleased with you is to make him pleased with himself in your society; and he avoided the mistake which the uninitiated often fall into, who, to produce a favourable impression, keep their own faculties upon the stretch, in the effort to shine, instead of imperceptibly drawing out and exercising the talents

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of those with whom they may wish to succeed. He had at length touched the right chord in Ruth's bosom, and it gave forth "most eloquent music." She unreservedly told him of her past struggles and her present prospects—showed him her engravings, with which he appeared to be extremely pleased—and, in the conviction that she was speaking to her "mother's friend," withheld no information that he seemed desirous to elicit.

An hour flew by. Frank and Arthur came in from their day's tasks, and, while Ruth arranged the tea-table, Dangleton devoted himself, not unsuccessfully, to conciliating their goodwill. Frank's heart he soon succeeded in winning, by a description of his new pony, "Tittlebat Titmouse," accompanied with an explicit promise that Frank should ride him the first leisure afternoon. As for Arthur, the dazzling prospect of being presented with copies of "Virgil" and "Lempriere's Classical Dictionary" had a charm for him which was irresistible. He could not help setting down Mr. Dangleton as one of the "cleverest fellows" he had ever met with.

Mr. Bibb came in, according to his confirmed custom, about tea-time, and Ruth introduced her visiter to him as one who had known her mother, and whose claims, therefore, to her friendship, admitted of no question. Notwithstanding this recommendation, the good grocer appeared to regard his presence with very little satisfaction; and it was remarked by the children that Mr. Bibb was unusually silent and

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grave. At length Dangleton became so very agreeable, and told so many pleasant little stories, and sang so winningly and so well, that even the "fat man's" distrust was dissipated for the time, and he laughed and talked with the rest, as if nothing had happened to make him serious.

It was eight o'clock before Dangleton rose to take his leave. Shaking hands all round, and assuring Ruth that she should have the promised portrait the next day, he gayly bade the party "good-night," and withdrew.

"A fine fellow, that! I like him!" exclaimed Frank, as the door was closed. "He is going to let me ride his pony, Tittlebat Titmouse."

"He is a good Latin scholar, too," said Arthur. "He has promised to lend me a Virgil and a Lempriere."

"Were you not delighted with his songs?" asked Ruth. "He has an excellent voice!"

"He has promised me a little work-box, all covered with pictures!" lisped May.

"Really, the young man seems to have taken a great fancy to you, all at once, children," quoth Mr. Bibb, with a puzzled look, slowly putting on his hat and stroking his chin. "I do not well know what to make of it. Young men do not act so without an object: however, let us hope that his is an honest one. So good-night, darlings!"

"Good-night, Mr. Bibb! Good-night, grandpapa!"

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CHAPTER XI.

IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A BARGAIN.

THE arts, the manœuvres, which Dangleton assiduously employed during the ensuing week to accomplish his mercenary scheme, were many and ingenious. He did not at once place in Ruth's possession the much-coveted portrait, but made it the pretext for daily visits, during which he always had some plausible excuse in readiness to account for the delay of the fulfilment of his promise. On these occasions, he laboured hard to render his society agreeable to her, and he flattered himself that he had succeeded. In a measure, he was right. He was well informed upon a variety of subjects in which she felt an interest, and she listened to him with much the same sort of pleasure that she might experience in reading a light, amusing book.

Just a week after the first memorable visit, he rose from his bed and carefully dressed himself, with the determination of addressing her in relation to the subject which had been uppermost in his thoughts. His father met him as he was leaving the house, and asked, "What cheer, Ned?"

"The coffee plantations will be ours before sundown,' replied Ned, with a whirl of his

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little golden-tipped cane. "I have prepared the way, so that there can be no possible doubt as to the result."

"You should seal the bargain at once, Ned, if she says yes. 'There's many a slip,' you know—eh?"

"I am not certain that I shall not come home a married man this very evening," said the sanguine Ned.

"Bravo, my boy! That's the way. Let there be no interval between your marches. Don't allow the enemy time to recruit."

"The Napoleon tactics, eh, father?"

"Just so, my boy! Remember, 'There's no such word as *fail!*'"

"Ay, sir. Leave me alone for success in such an enterprise as I am bound upon now. Good-morning!"

"Good-morning, Ned!"

Before quitting his room, the young man had placed in his pocket-book the promised portrait of Ruth's mother, believing it would be an auspicious offering with which to precede his proposal.

An hour's walk brought him to the obscure and retired lodgings occupied by the young Lovedays. He found Ruth alone, engaged upon a drawing on wood. This was, for him, a fortunate circumstance. Hitherto some one had always been present at their interviews; and now Ruth, with an instinctive sense of propriety, was proceeding to call Lucy Marvell, when he interrupted her, and said, "At length I have brought you the portrait. Here it is!"

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"Oh! give it me!" she cried, forgetting every other purpose in her anxiety to see it.

As she took it, and eagerly scanned every line and feature, her eyes sparkled, and the flush of aroused affection and joy overspread her face. Dangleton thought she had never looked half so beautiful. "What a prize I shall have in her, every way!" thought he.

For nearly five minutes she remained silently and intently gazing at the picture, deaf to all the inquiries addressed to her by her visiter, every sense absorbed in the single one of sight. At length her breast began to heave and her tears to fall, and, with a smile half cheerful and half tender, she exclaimed, "How very like! And how very beautiful!"

"And what a resemblance to yourself it bears, dear Ruth!" said the young man.

Ruth started, and looked in his face with a momentary expression of surprise; then transferring her gaze to the picture, she again examined it with renewed interest.

"As a work of art, it is admirable — is it not?" asked Dangleton. "Your opinion upon that subject is worth something, Ruth."

"It is, indeed, exquisite as a picture," she replied; "but in looking at it, I can think only of the fidelity of the likeness."

After inspecting it for some minutes longer, she continued, "And is this really to be mine, Mr. Dangleton? Am I at liberty to retain it?"

"Certainly, although I prize it much, Ruth, as a likeness of yourself."

"Thank you a thousand times!" she cried,

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not heeding or not perceiving the implied compliment.

Placing it carefully away in her desk, she proceeded towards the door to call Lucy, as she had before intended; but again Dangleton interposed.

"Hear me one moment, Ruth," said he, "before another's presence makes me falter in what I have to say. Although our acquaintance has been so brief, it has already been too long for my peace; and I have come to you this morning with the deliberate intention of making you a proposal of marriage. Do not be so startled. You shall be fully satisfied that my intentions are strictly honourable—that my father does not oppose my wishes—and that I have been impelled by the sincerest feelings of admiration, esteem, and love, to address you in this language. Do not think it unaccountable that a young man in my position should seek out a wife in this humble abode, for love levels all distinctions. Remember, also, that I have always been familiar with your mother's name, her virtues and respectability, and, need I add, her beauty, so faithfully reflected in her daughter's face."

So fluent had been Dangleton's address, and so unexpected the tenour of it, that Ruth was for some moments quite confused, and sank into a chair, hardly conscious of what she was doing or what she had been hearing. Her self-possession was restored, however, on seeing him kneel at her feet; and rising, she said, in a rapid, decisive tone, "I will not question

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your motives, but I can frankly assure you that I do not, and never can, have any disposition to receive your visits after this avowal on your part."

Had a mine been sprung beneath his feet, Dangleton could not have been more amazed than he was by this prompt and resolute reply, followed as it was by Ruth's instantaneous departure from the room. For a minute he remained in his kneeling posture, until, suddenly struck with the absurdity of his appearance, he started to his feet, and, while his cheeks grew white with anger, paced the room. His thoughts, whatever they might have been, were not audibly vented, but there was an expression ominous of danger to some one about his eyes and his quivering lips. Hastily seizing his hat, he left the house, and, lifting the knob of his cane so that it pressed against his teeth, walked slowly away, as if in deep thought.

No sooner was he gone, than Ruth sought out her good friend, Mr. Bibb, and related to him the whole occurrence.

At first he became indignant at the story, attributing to Dangleton the basest designs; but, upon reflection, he thought that this conclusion might be too hastily formed. He hardly knew what to infer from his conduct, and ended by telling Ruth that he would revolve the subject, and give her such advice when they met again as he might consider safest.

Ruth returned to her labours, and Mr. Bibb, seating himself upon a cask near the street door, pondered, in a state of silent abstraction, upon the communication he had just received.

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"What is the matter, my dear, that you look so serious?" asked a feminine voice, in a subdued, but somewhat sarcastic tone. "Has May Loveday's kitten lost the riband that was tied about its neck? Or has Master Frank's new kite had a hole made in it?"

Mr. Bibb stared vacantly at his wife, but did not condescend to reply. With a short, hysterical laugh, she turned away, without venturing upon any more decided demonstration of the spirit in which she regarded his predilections for juvenile society.

"Hand me the Directory, Mrs. Bibb!" said the grocer, with a dignified wave of the hand.

Mrs. Bibb's fingers twitched and quivered, as if they would have answered, could they have spoken, "We will tear your eyes out before we do it!"

"The Directory, Mrs. Bibb!" exclaimed the grocer, in a sterner tone.

"Ye-e-e-s, my dear," said the obedient wife, jerking the book into his lap.

The grocer gave her a look which made her lower her eyes and move away, and then turned over the leaves of the volume till he satisfied himself of Mr. Dangleton's address.

"I am going as far as Bleecker-street, and shall be absent an hour or two, Mrs. Bibb," said he, putting on his hat, and throwing aside his white apron.

"Will he not take a pound or two of almonds and loaf-sugar to give to the charity scholars?" inquired his amiable mate, looking vitriol and Prussic acid at him

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"You will attend to the shop till my return, Mrs. Bibb," said the grocer, without bestowing the slightest notice upon her bitter ironisms.

With a sigh for the good old times, when he dared not move into the street without asking her permission and satisfying her as to his errand, she saw him leave the shop and proceed meditatively along the sidewalk, while every limb, every motion of his body seemed to taunt her with its freedom and independence.

The grocer pursued his course by the nearest route to Mr. Dangleton's, and knocked at the door.

"Is Mr. Edward within?"

"No. You can leave your bill, however, and he will call and settle it in a week or two."

"I have no bill against him."

"Haven't you, indeed? Stop a moment. It is barely possible that he is in his room. I will go and see."

In less than a minute the servant returned, and told Mr. Bibb to follow him. Conducting him up two flights of stairs, he ushered him into a handsomely furnished apartment, where Mr. Edward was reclining at full length upon a sofa. His face was pale, and his hair disarranged, as if his hands had thrust the rich brown locks from his forehead, that the cool air might fan his temples.

"Well, old boy, what is wanted?" said Dangleton, lifting his head, but retaining his recumbent posture.

"We have met before, though you may not recollect my face," replied the grocer.

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Dangleton at once recalled the circumstance and the place, and he hesitated a moment whether he should be rude or civil to his visiter. Considerations of policy soon prevailed; and rising, and politely handing him a chair, he said, "I beg your pardon. The hue from that confounded curtain so altered the expression of your countenance, that I did not recognise you at first. I pray you to be seated, my dear Mr. Blabb."

"Bibb, if you please, sir."

"Oh, to be sure—Bibb! A very natural mistake, though! You will find this chair the most comfortable, Mr. Bibb."

"You may, perhaps, have already guessed my object in calling, Mr. Dangleton?"

Ned bowed, with all the reserve of a minister plenipotentiary.

"Ruth has told me," continued the grocer, "of the proposition you this day made to her. Allow me to ask you if it was made in good faith—if you seriously desire to make her your wife?"

The young man approached, and, grasping his interrogator by the hand, replied, with a tone and air of solemnity, "As Heaven is my witness, sir, I was and am in earnest. If you doubt me, ask my own father; bind me by any oaths which you can devise. What proof of my sincerity can you ask that I will not give you? Bring your own priest and your own witnesses, and this very day, this very hour, put the integrity of my offer to the test. I will most cheerfully accede to it."

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The earnestness of Ned's manner swept everything like doubt before it from the hearer's mind.

"I believe you, sir," replied the grocer, "and am rejoiced to find that my suspicions as to your motives are not well founded. I will make known my convictions to my young friend Ruth, and, should there be any change in your favour in her feelings, I will at once let you know."

He was about to take his leave, but Ned seized his hand, and, detaining him, made a most pathetic appeal, which lasted nearly ten minutes. He gave a flattering picture of his own situation in life—described in glowing terms his violent and "*disinterested*" (oh, Ned!) attachment —and concluded by imploring Mr. Bibb to aid him in his suit. The good grocer was affected even to tears by his warmth, and left him with the settled intention of espousing his cause.

On communicating, however, to Ruth that evening his convictions as to Dangleton's sincerity, he was surprised to find that a knowledge of the fact only increased her repugnance to receiving him any more as a visiter. Mr. Bibb immediately despatched a note to Mr. Edward, regretting that he could not afford him any hope in the prosecution of his suit, and requesting him to abstain from again calling on the Lovedays. Young Dangleton did not receive the message till the next morning, when, exhausted and harassed, he returned from a faro-table, at which he had lost during the night the whole of the sum he had recently received from his father. As he finished the perusal of

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the note, his lips became compressed as with the energy of a desperate purpose. All his resources had been cut off. Ruin stared him in the face. He well knew that his father no longer had the ability, even if he had the inclination, to supply him with any more money.

"Since fair means have failed, harsh ones must be tried," said the young man, ringing the bell, and sending a servant in quest of Bangs.

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CHAPTER XII.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

It was the first day of a new month. Arthur and Frank had gone out, the former to attend on Doctor Remington, and the latter to school. May had been sent as far as the Bowery to buy a skein of thread. Ruth was quite alone, engaged in cleaning her room. She was singing cheerfully. As she finished dusting the chairs and arranging her dress for the resumption of her labours with the graver, a knock was heard at the door. She opened it, and, to her surprise, saw Mr. Bangs.

"I have come," said he, while a disagreeable smile played about his mouth, "to receive your month's rent. You had forgotten all about it, had you not?"

"Oh, no!" replied Ruth. "I put aside the eight dollars last night for Mrs. Bangs, meaning to hand it to her the first opportunity to-day."

"Well, as I happen to be hard pushed for money, you may just give it to me."

"Certainly," said Ruth, unlocking her desk, and searching for the old, worn pocket-book in which she was accustomed to keep her humble earnings.

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To her dismay, it was nowhere to be found! In no possible nook or corner could she discover a vestige of it or its contents.

"Excuse me," exclaimed Bangs, "but I am in a good deal of a hurry."

"I must have been robbed!" murmured Ruth. "The pocket-book is not to be found. It contained upward of thirty dollars."

"None of your humbug!" said her rude and unprincipled landlord. "If you can't give me the money, say so. I know a family who are willing to give me ten dollars a month for these rooms, and to take them to-morrow."

An expression of pain and anxiety passed over Ruth's face as she replied, "Indeed, you wrong me by your distrust. But the day is not yet done. Leave me now, and I will make a great effort to raise the money for you."

"Very well," said Bangs. "I must have it before nightfall, so be spry."

Being left alone, Ruth reopened the desk to look for a half-finished engraving, upon which she thought Frank might be able to obtain a small sum in advance. Alas! none of her woodcuts and implements were to be found! Half a dozen beautiful drawings on wood, by that excellent artist, Chapman, which belonged to the publisher who employed her, and which she had taken to engrave, had also disappeared! Poor Ruth was almost in despair. This was a misfortune so utterly unexpected, and so overwhelming, that she could not, for the moment, check a vehement flood of tears. Weeping, however, was not the way by which to con-

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trive means to extricate herself from her dilemma. So, washing her eyes and composing her features, she went down into the "Mounseer's" room to relate to him her calamity.

The music-master sympathized warmly with her distress, and declared his joy at having the ability to relieve it. He thought of the money he had received from Mr. Dangleton, and, putting his hand in his pocket for his purse, drew forth—nothing but a tuning-key! He had also been robbed. Even the diamond ring, which had sparkled on his little finger, was no more to be seen. Parbleu! what a catastrophe! Should he sell the piano—the violin? Alas! they were not his own property; they were merely hired.

Leaving the worthy Frenchman far more afflicted at his little pupil's loss than at any he had himself experienced, Ruth flew for counsel to her friend the grocer. She found him perplexed and worried about his own affairs. A vexatious lawsuit had been revived against him, which was of a character to ruffle the serenest temper. He lent, however, a kind and attentive ear to Ruth's story, and then informed her that he had been obliged to expend all his ready money, with the exception of a dollar or two in the till, in feeing his lawyer, Mr. Dangleton. He would come round and see Bangs, and persuade him to desist for a week or two from his importunities, and, in the mean time, the children could procure from his shop, free of charge, whatever provender they might need for their daily sustenance. With this arrangement Ruth was constrained to be content.

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The grocer did not neglect his promise. Bangs was for a long time surly and refractory in the interview that ensued; but, on Mr. Bibb's openly expressing his indignation, and declaring that he would give the children a home in his own house, the coachman suddenly changed his tone, and consented that they should occupy their rooms a few days longer without molestation.

That very night the grocery and dwelling-house of Mr. Bibb took fire, most unaccountably, and were burned to the ground. The newspaper reporters accounted for the accident in various ways, according to the fertility of their imaginations. One of them stated that the owner, in a state of intoxication, had left a lighted candle in a charcoal basket. Another confidently informed the public that the conflagration originated in the spontaneous combustion of a box of Lucifer matches; but the report most generally accepted was that, through the culpable carelessness of Mr. Bibb, some alcohol, which he was pouring from a gallon measure, was accidentally ignited by a spark from his cigar. Now, as his was a temperance establishment, I cannot but consider this story as unfounded as the others. I have my suspicions as to the origin of the fire, and, when there is fitting occasion, I may take the liberty to declare them.

By this deplorable casualty, if so it may be called, Mr. Bibb was at once not only stripped of the means of aiding others, but rendered an object for charity himself. He bitterly regret-

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ted the circumstance, not merely on his own account, but for the sake of the young Lovedays, whom he had hoped to assist. A friendly neighbour offered him and his wife a shelter—it was all he had to offer—and the grocer gratefully availed himself of the invitation.

For a week Bangs refrained from harassing Ruth for her small debt, contenting himself with keeping a vigilant and cautious eye upon the movements of the orphans, who had promptly decided on certain measures for retrieving their loss. Frank was at once taken from school, and sent into the streets again to vend newspapers. May was ambitious to do all the sewing that could be obtained for her, and a very nice seamstress she was. Arthur quitted Doctor Remington's employment to adopt a calling infinitely more laborious and more immediately profitable. The change cost him a pang, but a consciousness that he was doing his duty cheered him on. Frank had told him that money was to be made at the "steamboat landings" by offering his services as a porter, and transferring the luggage of passengers. Arthur was of a delicate constitution, though recently it had been much invigorated by exercise in the open air. The rough and painful tasks to which he was now subjected, of lifting heavy trunks on his shoulder, carrying well-stuffed carpet-bags and boxes, threatened, however, to undermine his health and overstrain his muscles.

As for Ruth, after many unsuccessful applications for work, she had obtained a contract for an engraving on wood, for which she was

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to be paid ten dollars *on delivery;* and at the execution she now laboured with unremitted assiduity. Many little things had occurred to annoy and dishearten her. Mr. Alison had sent her a note,* informing her that her services in the church choir were no longer wanted. Articles of furniture and pieces of crockery were miraculously broken or abstracted. Dresses were torn, and soiled, and burned, no one could tell how. Everything seemed to go wrong; and, finally, poor Frank, as he was returning home one evening, was struck in the leg with a loaded cane by some person unknown, and so seriously lamed that he was obliged to take to his bed.

Ruth rose early and retired late, working till she could hardly see upon the fine engraving under her hands. Notwithstanding her numerous trials, her cheerful and serene temper underwent no change. Perhaps she sang somewhat less than she had been accustomed to of late, for she had been obliged to be more thoughtful; but she did not waste a moment of her time in useless lamentation and repining; for she felt that she was in Heaven's hands, and that, if she did but do her duty, she could not be harmed. It was her faith, also, that, so long as she remained pure and true, there were good spirits hovering near her, among the brightest of whom was her mother, who had power to protect and gladden her. Who shall say that to such influences she was not oftentimes in-

* It was subsequently proved that the note was a forgery.

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debted for encouragement in her struggles and for light in her gloom?

Our attention must now be directed to a visit received by Mr. Bibb some ten days after the destruction of his property. That worthy individual had been so effectually plucked by his lawyer on the one hand, and singed by the fire on the other, that he was left completely destitute; and Mr. Dangleton had managed to keep him so incessantly "bothered" about the lawsuit as to allow him no time to visit even his friends, the Lovedays, until that very day, when he had found them in a state which caused him no little concern.

Returning to his temporary abode, he was told that a clergyman wished to speak with him in the parlour. Entering, he encountered a very demure-looking person, dressed in black, with a white neckcloth, and spectacles. This individual introduced himself, in a very solemn manner, as the "Reverend Mr. M——," giving the name of a popular and eminent divine.

Mr. Bibb, though somewhat awestruck at being in the presence of one of whom he had heard and read so much, though he had never seen him before, asked, tremblingly, to what he was indebted for the honour of the visit.

"I have come, sir," replied the man in black, "to speak with you in regard to my young friend, Mr. Edward Dangleton."

"Oh, yes, I am glad to hear it," exclaimed Mr. Bibb, much relieved; for he had begun to apprehend that, by some twist of the law, he had been made a subject for clerical consolation and "last confessions."

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"Alas! Mr. Bibb," continued his solemn visiter, "you cannot well conceive the suffering which that excellent young man has undergone for the last three weeks, through his becoming enamoured of the maiden, Ruth Loveday. In vain have I told him that there is balm in Gilead. He knows it, but will not be comforted; and, verily, I fear much for his life, unless we can persuade the damsel, who, it would seem, knows not his worth, to consent to listen to his suit. Verily, it is sinfulness in her to be so obdurate. I am told that she is poor; that her family suffereth for the necessaries of life; and that she subjects herself and her brothers to labours which they cannot well bear, out of a vain and foolish pride and obstinacy of spirit. Verily, this should not be. I can vouch for my young friend, Mr. Edward, that he is one of the godly, and that his affection for this unworthy maiden is his only weakness—"

"Excuse me," interrupted Mr. Bibb; "do not call her unworthy. Ruth is one of the best, most industrious girls of my acquaintance."

"Vanity of vanities!" continued the stranger. "You speak like one who loveth darkness better than light. What good reason can the maiden give for rejecting my young friend's offer, and lacerating his tender spirit? Is he not respectable, pious, all that he should be? Has he not this world's dross in abundance—yea, enough for Ruth and all her friends?"

"I must confess, sir," said Mr. Bibb, "that I wonder much at her conduct in rejecting an offer that might be so advantageous to her and to her family."

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"It is sinful, sir, absolutely sinful!" exclaimed the visiter. "Be it your duty, then, to influence her in the adoption of a course more consistent with her duty to herself and her family; to persuade her, in short, to listen to the honourable proposals of my friend, Mr. Edward."

"I will renew my entreaties this very evening," replied Mr. Bibb; "for I cannot see any sensible reason why she should be so blind to her own interests. Are you sure, though, that the young man's habits are strictly correct?"

"Are my own correct, Mr. Bibb? Do I pass my time in exhorting sinners to repentance, or in riding, driving, drinking, and such like vanities? I think I am justified in calling Mr. Edward the most exemplary young man in New-York. I can bring you five deacons from my own church who will testify in his behalf. You must read his speech at the great Temperance meeting in the Park. I will send you a copy. In the mean time, do me the favour to accept these few little tracts, and to give them an attentive perusal."

As he said this, the reverend stranger thrust into the grocer's hands a dozen tracts, which were calculated to give the recipient a very exalted notion of the donor's piety. I suspect that a phrenologist would have found the organ of "marvellousness" very fully developed in the worthy grocer's head, for he swallowed everything that the "Reverend Mr. M——" had been saying, without a particle of distrust. He coincided with the sanctimonious gentleman perfectly as to the propriety of persuading Ruth to

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receive Mr. Edward's addresses, and, in conclusion, promised that he would use every exertion to bring about a result so immediately advantageous to herself, and so essential to the health and peace of mind of the youth, who, as Mr. M—— declared, was "a perfect model for the young men of the age."

With a parting exhortation to Mr. Bibb "to be virtuous if he would be happy," the distinguished individual gave him his blessing, and departed. Had the grocer watched his proceedings after he had turned the corner, he might have had his suspicions aroused as to the gentleman's claims to the title of "reverend." Jumping into a coach, where Mr. Edward was seated in waiting, this distributor of tracts told the driver, with a very unclerical oath, to "drive on as if—"

I cannot consent to disfigure my page with the rest of the exclamation.

"Well, Dick, how did you succeed in playing the parson?" asked "*the model for the young men of the age.*"

"Admirably, Ned! Not so broadly as to waken his suspicions by a caricature. I had your interests too much at heart for that. The old fool was decidedly caught. I quite persuaded him that you were the most exemplary of young men, and that it would be positively sinful in the girl to be any longer unkind. He promised to see her to-night, and win her over to repentance. The picture I drew of your sufferings made his heart yearn with pity. There is no mistake about it: he will plead your cause

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with her as eloquently as you could do it yourself."

"Tousand tanks! as Monsieur Mallet says. Now, Dick, we will drive to my rooms, where you shall divest yourself of your wig and spectacles, not forgetting that pre-Adamitish white cravat—and then, ho for woodcocks and Champagne at Delmonico's!"

"I am your man!" replied Dick. "This masking has given me an appetite."

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CHAPTER XIII.

TRIALS OF TEMPER.

MISFORTUNE now seemed to dog the heels of Ruth and her little family, turn which way they would. Before Frank could recover from his lameness so far as to be able to walk out, Arthur became ill and enfeebled in consequence of a strain produced by lifting heavy burdens in his new capacity of a passengers' porter. Ruth, with feelings of profound grief, had seen him come home, evening after evening, pale and exhausted, and she had apprehended that his constitution could not endure such severe tasks. Apprehension was now changed into sad conviction.

With all his exertions during the last ten days, Arthur had been hardly able to earn enough to supply their table with necessary food. The debt to Bangs remained, of course, unliquidated. That individual again became importunate, and baited poor Ruth with incessant applications for money. On the day at which our narrative has arrived, she informed him, with a cheerful face, that she had at length finished her engraving, and, as Frank and Arthur were unwell, she would go herself and receive the ten dollars that had been promised on its delivery.

"It is a long walk. You had better let Will-

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iam go for you. He has an errand to do in Fulton-street," said Bangs, in an unusually gracious tone.

"Oh, if William will be so obliging, I shall like it," replied Ruth; "for I ought to stay and prepare some gruel for Arthur."

"Give it me, and I will send him with it," continued Bangs.

Ruth tied it up neatly and carefully in several folds of paper, and writing upon the envelope the address of the person who was to buy it, she gave it into the hands of the crafty landlord, accompanied with a receipted bill, which the messenger was to exchange for the money.

Bangs left the room apparently in very good humour at the prospect of being paid his rent, and Ruth congratulated herself in the same anticipation.

Going into Arthur's chamber, she inquired tenderly how he felt.

"The pains in my breast are very bad indeed, sister," said he, with a languid smile.

"Shall I send for Doctor Remington?" she asked.

"Not yet," replied Arthur. "I may be better soon. The Doctor did not seem well pleased at my leaving him, and I thought it would seem like begging if I told him all my reasons."

"Is there nothing besides this gruel that you would like?"

"I feel as if a little chicken broth would do me good; but if it can't be got, it is no matter."

Ruth looked into the state of her finances.

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Not a solitary sixpence was left! She recollected, however, that there would be two dollars over from the amount to be received for the woodcut, and she told Arthur that in an hour or two he should have his broth.

It was twilight before William Bangs returned. Rushing into Ruth's room, he exclaimed, "Oh, Ruth Loveday! the man sends back your engraving, and says it isn't worth any more than a broken brick. It is scratched all over, and spoiled!"

"Let me look at it!" said Ruth, after a minute's silence, during which she became quite pale.

William handed her the cut. With trembling fingers she removed the envelope, and exposed the engraving, on which she had expended so many laborious hours, defaced and rendered utterly worthless.

"I am afraid you let it rub against some hard substance in your pocket, William," said she, with a slight tremulousness in her tones, while her eyelids quivered, and a tear or two stole forth.

"No, I couldn't have done that," he replied, "for I carried it wrapped up in my handkerchief in my hat."

"And didn't you remove it from the time it was put into your hands until you delivered it?"

"Not once."

"It is very strange!"

"I am sorry for you, Ruth, indeed I am; but pray believe that it was not my fault; I carried it very carefully."

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"I believe you readily, William, for you have always been obliging and good."

"I wish I could help you," said William, with tears in his eyes; "but father makes me—"

"William!" exclaimed the stern voice of Mr. Bangs upon the stairs; and William started off without finishing what he had to say.

"Now, my dear, if you will oblige me," said Bangs, entering, and accosting Ruth.

How slow are the truly pure and upright to suspect evil in others! It did not once flash across Ruth's mind that Bangs himself had perpetrated the mischief she was deploring; and to his artful address she replied, "It distresses me to be obliged to disappoint you once more. But this cut has been injured—how, I cannot imagine—and it is now valueless. I will again go to work, and, if you will give me a week more, I think I can pay you."

"This is enough to try the patience of Job!" cried Mr. Bangs. "Haven't you any property upon which you could raise enough to meet my demand? I hope you do not mean to cheat me!"

"Oh, no!" said Ruth, while a faint smile, in which there was the least dash of scorn, played athwart her lips.

"This bedstead and this desk would bring, perhaps, at auction, five or six dollars," remarked Bangs. "I do not see much else worth taking, unless it is those pails and tubs."

"Oh! we cannot do without those. We must have water to wash in!" exclaimed Ruth.

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"You must, eh?" quoth the brutal landlord "Hadn't you better pay your debts first?"

"Forbear a while, sir, and I shall surely have the ability to satisfy your demand. While I have my hands and my eyes, I can earn enough to support me and mine."

"The old story! Call to-morrow, or some day next week. I have had enough of that, Miss Ruth. I can't stand it any longer."

"Then do your worst!" replied Ruth, with a sudden energy, which amazed her tormentor. "Seize upon every article of furniture, of raiment, and of food that we have. Drive us forth houseless. Still we shall have a Protector, who, if he heeds the ravens when they cry, surely will listen to the prayer of his human children for succour and defence."

As she spoke, she crossed her hands upon her breast and looked up, while a celestial smile irradiated her face. Her eyes kindled as with light reflected from a seraph's plumes.

With a repelling gesture, as if the fiend in his heart had been dazzled and affrighted by the vision, Bangs stammered out something about "granting her a day or two longer," and hurried out of the room.

When he had gone, Ruth sank upon her knees, and implored that omnipresent Being, in whom is the source of all light, and life, and happiness, and beauty, to guide and strengthen her in her worldly struggles, that she might do nothing but what was acceptable in his sight, and leave undone nothing that duty and conscience might dictate.

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A knock at the door disturbed her meditations, and, opening it, she encountered her friend, Mr. Bibb.

"Why, Ruth, where are you all?" said he. "I knocked three times before I heard your voice."

"May is in the other room reading to the boys, and I—I was lost in thought."

"I am glad to find you alone. I have some private matters to talk about. Come and seat yourself by my side."

Ruth obeyed.

"You believe me your friend—your sincere friend—do you not, Ruth?"

"I do, most unhesitatingly."

"Then I may speak my mind freely—may I not?—upon any subject which affects your welfare, no matter how delicate and tender it may be."

"Yes, upon any subject."

"Then I must say, my dear, that I think your persistance in the resolution to reject the very handsome proposal that has been made to you by Mr. Dangleton, is irrational, if not—excuse me—unamiable."

"What are your reasons for thinking so?"

"Rather let *me* ask, what are your reasons for refusing his offer?"

"One reason alone is all sufficient: I do not feel any particular affection for him; not so much, for instance, as I do for you or for Monsieur Mallet."

"In that conclusion, Ruth, you are hasty and

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unreasonable. You will admit that his love for you is remarkably disinterested?"

"It would seem so."

"Then there is one good reason for a return of the feeling on your part."

"Granted."

"So vehement is his regard for you, and so deep his chagrin at his failure in winning your favour, that he has been dangerously ill for some days in consequence."

"Indeed!"

"Such is the fact. I have it from a distinguished clergyman, his friend, who called on me this morning, and who thinks you do not show altogether a Christian temper in causelessly inflicting pain by discouraging an attachment so sincere, and so advantageous to yourself if admitted."

"Did a clergyman say that?"

"To be sure he did. He told me, furthermore, that Mr. Edward was a model for the young men of the age, and that he could vouch for his good habits and disposition. When I add that he is rich, I do not mean to present mere wealth as an inducement to you to marry contrary to your inclination; but when, in connexion with that, there are so many things in his favour, I do not understand why you should suffer a mere whim to stand in the way of your own interests and those of your little family."

"You touch me there. What would I not give to send Arthur to college—to prepare Frank properly for a counting-room—and to educate May as she should be!"

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"All these things you could undoubtedly do if you would consent to this unexceptionable union. Pray, what do you dislike in Mr. Edward?"

"Nothing of which I am conscious."

"Is it not, then, a little selfish in you, Ruth, to see your brothers toiling till they are sick, and suffering bitterly for the want of proper food and care, when you have the power to relieve them by a word? Even supposing that in uttering that word you had to make a slight sacrifice of inclination, would it not be ungenerous to refrain on that account?"

Ruth seemed puzzled for an instant, and then exclaimed, "My heart assures me that you are wrong, though my tongue cannot tell you why!"

"To save your brothers and sister from penury and disease—death perchance—will you not accede to this proposal?" asked the grocer.

"No! As Heaven is my witness, I will not!"

"And why?"

"Because, in so doing, I would be no better than those fallen creatures of my sex, whom I cannot even name without a blush. Think you not that *they* too have the plea of expediency for their mercenary violation of the holy sympathies which God has implanted in their natures? May not *they* have their sick and pining brothers, their dying parents, or their own desperate necessities to goad them to acts at which the angels weep?"

"Yes, Ruth; but—but the comparison is not a fair one. The sanction of marriage—"

"Ay, the sanction of marriage! I know what

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you would say. But the religion which my mother taught me, by example and by precept, has made me feel that the sanction of marriage can only render the prostitution the baser and the more enduring; not, I well know, in the eyes of that packed jury of the world, society, but none the less so, on that account, in the eyes of eternal justice, purity, and truth!"

"I hardly know what to make of you, Ruth, you talk so strangely."

"I feel as if it were my mother who had been talking through my lips."

"You have strange fancies, child; but let me ask you whether your immediate necessities have not been supplied through the sale of your engraving?"

Ruth narrated the accident by which the expected supplies from this source had been cut off.

"And so you are left utterly destitute!" cried Mr. Bibb. "What do you mean to do?"

"I have not yet formed any plan for providing for my present wants," replied Ruth.

"It distresses me, Ruth, that I cannot aid you."

"Do not be troubled concerning us, my dear friend. We shall not be forsaken. Be sure of that."

"But, Ruth, consider how completely you can relieve yourself, and your sister and brothers, from all perplexities, by adopting the course so strongly recommended, not only by myself, but by a man of sanctity like the Reverend Mr. M——."

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"I have answered you fully and decidedly on that point."

"But how know you that your feelings may not change towards this young man; that, as you become better acquainted with him, you may esteem him the more?"

"It cannot be."

"But why?"

"I know not."

"Surely your affections are disengaged?"

"I believe so; and yet—"

Ruth's fingers unconsciously crept towards her bosom. What is it that they draw forth in their tight but delicate clasp? She starts on seeing it, while the warm blood flushes her breast and face. It has answered the question, which she herself was unable to solve even in reply to the interrogation of her own mind! It is the little silver pencil-case accidentally left with her by Stanford at his last interview.

"What has disquieted you, Ruth?" asked her visiter.

Smiling, she turned away her head, kissed the cherished token, restored it to its pure resting place, and replied, "It was but a momentary recollection—a thought which came to confirm my purpose, and make me iron to your entreaties."

"Then you persist in rejecting the means of rescuing your family and yourself from indigence and suffering?"

"Ay, to save them and me from death itself, I repeat my declaration, that I would reject such means."

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"I am afraid that some silly novel has turned your head, my dear. But good-by! Though you will not take my advice, hold me still your friend; and, though I have nothing else to give, let me give at least my sympathy."

"You are not offended?"

"Not offended—a little disappointed, that is all; but let us hope for the best. Good-by! I cannot stop to kiss May now. I will try to see you again to-morrow. Good-by!"

And Ruth was once more alone.

"Have I acted rightly?" said she to herself. "Ay! Though the whole world should cry *no*, my heart would serenely answer *yes!*"

Yes! You *have* acted rightly, my dear Ruth. You have shown that there is *one* shrine in a pure woman's heart which the unhallowed hand of expediency cannot reach, to lay upon it its sordid offerings; *one* altar which neither the hard gripe of penury, nor the fierce stings of ambushed oppression, nor the famishing cries of kindred, wasted by disease and want, nor the specious sophistries of pretended sanctity, nor the allurements of wealth and fashion, can induce her to profane. You have been assayed in the white heat of temptation, and the "most fine gold" has come forth undimmed and without alloy.

Other trials may be close at hand. You may be doomed to dreary years of drudgery, sickness, and privation; the frail remaining ties that bind you to earth may be severed one by one; and you may toil on in single misery, uncheered by a ray of the hope that the full, fresh

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fount of tenderness and love in your heart may be one day unsealed, and its channel found; but I fear not that you will ever prove false to the sacred sympathies of your soul, or that all the power of Sin can tempt you to barter or to quench one spark of their vestal fires.

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CHAPTER XIV.

PURITY AND SECURITY.

RUTH sought a consultation the next morning with Mrs. Bangs as to the possibility of selling the desk and the bedstead; and Mrs. Bangs told her that if a new hinge was put upon the desk, and the bedstead was well cleaned, almost any auctioneer would give ten dollars for the two. She added that her son Calvin, the carpenter, who was now well enough to use his tools, would willingly repair the desk; and that Ruth and May could themselves take down and clean the bedstead.

To this arrangement Ruth cheerfully consented. The desk was carried to Calvin's room, and the two sisters undertook the task assigned to them. They were in the midst of their labours when they were startled by Monsieur Mallet's voice at their door.

"*Entrez-vous; mon cher Monsieur Mallet!*" cried Ruth, wiping her little hands with a towel, and pulling down her sleeves.

"You see we are all in confusion," continued she, in French, as he entered.

"I have good news for my dear little pupil," said he, shaking some gold pieces in his hand. "All this came from my new scholar, Mrs. Blazonby, who took her first lesson in music from

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me to-day. I told her the story of your loss, and she sends you these two half eagles, with the request that, should you want more, you will let her know."

"She is very good," exclaimed Ruth, not knowing by whom the Frenchman had been introduced to his new acquaintance.

"That is true—though she knows very little of music," replied he. "By-the-way, she made me promise to bring you with me to her house this evening; she is so anxious to see you and hear you play!"

"I am afraid to leave Arthur. He is rather feverish to-day."

"Oh, May will nurse him, and I will send round from the eating-cellar some nice boiled chicken and rice for his dinner. So please consent to go with me, my little pupil. Mrs. Blazonby has promised to send her own coach for us at seven. Will you not go?"

"Since you are so desirous, I will. Besides, I would like to thank the good lady for this money, and tell her that I mean to repay her as soon as I can."

"It is a bargain, then, that we go?"

"Yes."

"Then good-by for the present."

"A gleam of sunshine at last, May!" cried Ruth, as the music-master closed the door. "I thought it was about time for it. Take this money at once to Mrs. Bangs for her husband. I thank Heaven that I am at length able to relieve myself of his importunities."

May complied, and in a minute or two re-

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turned with two dollars in change, which remained after deducting the amount for rent from the two half eagles.

The dinner which Monsieur Mallet had promised now arrived, and it was found more than sufficient for all four. Leaving May to attend to the domestic affairs, Ruth put on her bonnet, and tripped out of the house to procure some box-wood, with which to make a new copy of the engraving that had been damaged. As she walked at a quick pace through the Bowery, there was little in her outward appearance to strike the attention of the ordinary observer. Her dress was extremely plain, and, from the rapidity of her movements, it was evident that she was not a young lady of leisure. Occasionally, however, the exclamation "What a sweet face!" would escape from some one, who had an eye for modest beauty and grace without the "foreign aid of ornament." But little did Ruth imagine that any eyes amid the great current were fixed even with a moment's curiosity upon her face and figure. She was too intent upon the object of her errand for any such thoughts.

After purchasing the article of which she was in quest, she returned home with undiminished speed, and before two o'clock was once more engaged at the task of transferring to wood the promised picture. For four hours she worked without intermission; then, carefully putting aside her implements, she prepared herself for the visit to Mrs. Blazonby. In a few minutes Monsieur Mallet announced that the coach was

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at the door; and bidding May take good care of the invalids till her return, Ruth obeyed his summons. The steps of the carriage were thrown down, and the door opened by William Bangs. It was too dark to see the face of the driver. Not a word, save a kind "How do you do?" from Ruth to William, was spoken; and the coach rolled rapidly away with the music-master and his pupil.

They soon reached their place of destination. Mrs. Blazonby received them at the door of her house, shaking hands in a very cordial manner with the Frenchman, and kissing Ruth most affectionately. She ushered them up stairs into a parlour gayly furnished, where Ruth was introduced to a young lady with remarkably red cheeks, whose name was Josephine.

"I am charmed to see you, my dear," said Mrs. Blazonby, taking off Ruth's bonnet, and leading her to a seat on the sofa.

"I am very grateful to you, Mrs. Blazonby," replied Ruth, "for the money you sent me. I hope to be able very soon to return it."

"Oh, do not think of it, my dear. To me it is a mere trifle. It is my delight to do good. Now do play me a sweet tune. I have heard so much in praise of your playing!"

Ruth looked at her instructer, who gave her his hand and led her to the piano, where she played a variety of airs of his selection.

"How sweet!" cried Mrs. Blazonby.

"Charming! Was it not?" said Miss Josephine.

After the music, a servant entered with some

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ice-cream, plates, and glasses, and a bottle of Champagne on a salver.

"Let me give you some ice," said the mistress of the house, handing Ruth a plate full.

Ruth tasted a little of it, but, not liking the flavour, allowed the Frenchman to replace it on the table.

"If you will not eat the ice, I must insist upon your tasting some Champagne," exclaimed the hostess, holding a glass bubbling with foam to Ruth's lips.

"It is wine—is it not?" asked Ruth.

"Yes, but so weak that it has no more effect than water," replied Mrs. Blazonby.

"I thank you—I do not wish it," returned Ruth, putting back the proffered glass.

"But a little of it will do you good, my dear. It is nice and sweet."

"I am not thirsty; and if I were, I could not drink it."

"Not a sip?"

"Do not urge me."

At this instant the servant re-entered the room with a letter, which, he said, had been left at the door for Monsieur Mallet. The bearer had first carried it to his lodgings, but, on not finding him at home, and learning where he was passing the evening, he had hurried with it to Mrs. Blazonby's.

"By your leave, ladies!" said the Frenchman, breaking the seal, and approaching the candelabra over the mantelpiece. The letter was in French, and the following is its translation:

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'My dear Friend:—Do not be too much transported when you learn that your old companion and admirer, Von Steinbach of Prague, is in New-York. Yes! he arrived in the packet of to-day, and is now at the Battery Hotel, somewhat indisposed in body, but sustained by the hope of seeing you. Do come to him this evening, if you can only stay five minutes. He cannot sleep without having seen you. Hasten, then, at once to your devoted and expecting friend, Von Steinbach."

For nearly five minutes Monsieur Mallet capered about the room like a crazy person, kissing the letter and exclaiming, "Von Steinbach is come! Von Steinbach is come! *Quelle bonheur!* Oh! *quelle bonheur!*"

As soon as he could recover from his elation sufficiently to make himself intelligible, he informed Ruth that a very dear friend, whom he had not met for many years, had just arrived in the city, and that he must call on him at once. If the ladies would excuse him, he would go, and return for Ruth before half past nine o'clock.

"Oh! see your friend to-morrow," said Mrs. Blazonby. "Stay now, and give us some music."

Monsieur Mallet protested that he could never look Von Steinbach in the face after consenting to such a delay.

"Then Ruth must content herself with the piano, and with looking at these engravings till you come back," resumed the hostess.

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Ruth felt an instinctive reluctance, she knew not why, to remain; but the Frenchman assured her that he would tear himself away from Von Steinbach after a momentary embrace, and hasten to accompany her home. She saw no alternative but to consent after such a promise.

He had not been gone long before a visiter was announced, and Mr. Edward Dangleton entered the room, to Ruth's manifest surprise. Mrs. Blazonby introduced them as if she were not aware of their previous acquaintance. Mr. Edward bowed coldly, and remarked that he had met the young lady before. He then took a seat by the side of Miss Josephine, and made some grave observation about a sermon which he said he had heard the night before.

"Josephine, my dear," said Mrs. Blazonby, "you must go up in the children's chamber, and hear them say their prayers. Tell them that I will come and kiss them before I go to bed, but that I have company now whom I cannot leave."

Josephine left the room, and Mr. Edward took up a book, and applied himself to its perusal with a very solemn expression of countenance. A servant entered with a message that one of the children was crying for its mother.

"How provoking!" cried Mrs. Blazonby, rising from her chair. "I will be back in one instant, my dear Ruth."

"May I not go with you?" asked Ruth. "I am very fond of children, and would like to see yours."

Mrs. Blazonby appeared embarrassed for a

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moment, and then said, "The fact is, my dear, that my youngest is just recovering from the scarlet fever, and I am a little timid about having you breathe the atmosphere of the room."

"Oh, that is reason enough why I should not go," replied Ruth, as her thoughts recurred to May and her brothers.

"I will not be gone two minutes, my dear," continued Mrs. Blazonby; and she hurried out of the parlour.

Ruth felt a good deal annoyed at being left alone with Mr. Dangleton, but a thought of danger did not cross her brain.

The young man, after a few moments' silence, approached her, and remarked that fate seemed to throw her in his way, in spite of his strenuous exertions to banish her image from his heart.

"Shall I not play you a tune—the overture to La Bayadere, for instance?" asked Ruth, eager to escape the subject of his griefs.

"You will but probe the wound by so doing," replied he. "Hear me but one moment, Ruth. Tell me that I am not utterly exiled from your presence; that, if I may not hope to move you to kindness, I may at least have the privilege of visiting you from time to time—of gazing in that lovely face—of listening to those ravishing tones. Surely you will not object?"

"I beg you never more to address me in such terms. Were I differently situated—were my parents living—I might not, perhaps, refuse you the poor privilege of visiting me; but, under present circumstances, I must. So, if you

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would have me still think of you with respect, do not try to change my purpose; and, should we accidentally meet again as now, do not allude to a subject which cannot but embarrass and pain me."

"Do you, then, utterly exclude me from all hope of winning your favour?"

"Yes, utterly. I am sure there could be no earthly contingency which could move my decision a jot."

"But there are contingencies of which you may never have dreamed, Ruth Loveday!" exclaimed Dangleton, while his eyes flashed and his voice changed.

"What mean you?"

"That I am not tamely to be made the victim of a mere girl's groundless caprice. If gentleness and entreaty cannot lead you to do that which will raise you and yours from the vilest poverty to opulence and respectability, then—"

"What then?"

"The moment for plain speaking has come at last. Choose now between two alternatives. You well know that I seek your hand in all sincerity. I offer you honourable marriage; a union that will enable you to enjoy and distribute all the luxuries of wealth without a limit. You can oppose no other objection save a mere whim to my proposal; and I am resolved that my life's happiness shall not be wrecked through such a cause. I have, therefore, taken most efficient measures to secure my object. I will prove a better friend to you than you are to yourself. Not far distant a magistrate is in

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waiting with a marriage contract. You must sign it this very night; and I do not doubt that you will do it willingly, when all the inducements are presented."

Before Dangleton had stopped speaking, Ruth had sprung to the door and tried the handle. It was locked on the outside. She glanced at the windows. They were secured beneath the curtains by shutters iron-barred. She cried in a loud, indignant voice for "help." No answer was returned; and, folding her hands upon her breast, she drew up her lithe, erect figure to its full height, and gazed silently in the face of her opponent.

"I see that you are by this time aware," continued the young man, "that the people in the house are as much your friends as I am. Now say, will you not consent that the little ceremony of signing your name shall take place at once?"

"Never!"

"Perhaps the other alternative will suit you better. It is—*dishonour!*" and he hissed the word in her ear with a venomous energy.

Ruth remained silent, following his wavering eyes with hers, till Dangleton, shaking off their influence with a desperate effort, and advancing a step with outstretched arms, exclaimed, "Decide! and at once! We are alone, and there is no aid for you!"

"We are *not* alone, and there *is* aid!" replied Ruth. "Even now, while your brutal menace is yet hot upon your lips, a special Providence is present, which holds me safe. We see it not,

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but it is nigh. I feel it in the very air! Its clasp is tight about me! Oh! bow down, and ask forgiveness for your intended sin. You have *my* pardon. Seek Heaven's, before the crime expands till it blacken your whole soul."

"What, Ned! shall this canting hussy make you tremble and retreat at the very moment when the game is in your own hands?" muttered the young man. "No! 'Twas a bold stake, and it shall be boldly played for!"

Summoning up all his bad motives to give vehemence to his purpose, he again advanced, when a loud ringing at the street-door checked him, and made him turn pale. Ruth betrayed no other outward signs of surprise at the sound than those of raising her forefinger in a listening attitude to her lips, and nodding her head as if in response to an expected signal.

The ringing was succeeded by noises of more decided import. The panels of the door, which was fastened by an iron bar, were vigorously battered, till there came a sound as if they had been staved in.

Shivering with dismay, and cowering as if he would shrink himself into imperceptible dimensions, the guilty young man exclaimed, "Oh, do not expose me! Be merciful!"

"Kneel!" said Ruth, pointing to the floor.

He obeyed.

"I implore you—" resumed he.

"Not to me—oh! not to me—did I intend that you should kneel in contrition," cried Ruth. "Freely, and from the bottom of my soul, do I pardon you; but there is a higher

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tribunal to which you must look for that forgiveness which shall avail; and it is the prayer of my heart, even now, that your appeal may not be in vain, but that your repentance of this night's sin may be the means of leavening your whole spirit with a purifying influence."

As Ruth ceased, the door was unlocked, and Dangleton started to his feet. The persons who entered were Doctor Remington, Mr. Maverick, a respectable young lawyer, and several gentlemen, whose names I have been unable to learn. The object of their visit, and the causes which led to it, shall be explained in another chapter.

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CHAPTER XV.

AN UNTIMELY END AND A TIMELY DISCOVERY.

The coachman who drove Ruth and the music-master to the residence of the so-called Mrs. Blazonby was, as the reader may have suspected, no other than Bangs. Depositing them at the door, he walked his horses as far as Broadway, and stopped before a small shop in the vicinity of one of the minor theatres, where there were placards at the windows with such inscriptions as "Tom and Jerry;" "Milk Punch;" "Sherry Cobblers;" "Mint Juleps;" with various other mysterious titles, the precise meaning of which was known only to initiated topers.

Bangs was even at that moment under the influence of strong drink; but the vampire intemperance within him continued to cry "Give, give!" Tying the reins to one of the iron arms of his coach-seat, he attempted to jump to the sidewalk; but, in the act, his foot caught in the tightened reins, and he was thrown with violence to the ground, his head striking against the curbstone. He did not rise again of his own strength. Some humane passers-by, among whom was young Maverick, bore him to a neighbouring shop. Doctor Remington was immediately sent for, and he pronounced the wound

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fatal. It was impossible that the unhappy man could live another hour.

"What! Will the frolic be over so soon, doctor?" asked the drunkard, suddenly lifting his head.

Till this question, every one had supposed that the sufferer was totally unconscious.

"I think," replied the doctor, "that if you have any directions you would like to give—any unsettled business upon your mind that concerns your family, if you have a family—you would better speak now."

"I understand—you think he is at the end of his last heat: he'll balk you, doctor—there's some fun left in him yet. Ha, ha, ha! Go it, Ned! She's young, and fair, and tender—is she not? a rich prize for the old soul-trapper! By this time she is yours. At Blazonby's she is as safe as she could be in the hottest abode of fiends."

"He raves," said the doctor, turning to one of the gentlemen near.

"If I mistake not, there is some meaning in his madness," whispered young Maverick, who, with a lawyer's practised alertness of apprehension, had detected a purport in the wild words of the dying man. "Hark! he speaks again."

"But the money, Ned! the money! Where is that? The job must be well paid for. It was black and tough. So hand over. Ha! you think that death settles all accounts—that a dying man can't claim his own. Not so, Ned! not so!"

"Tell me where Ned is to be found, and I

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will run and get you the money," whispered Maverick in the madman's ear. "But I fear you have not strength to tell me, and that you must die without getting your dues."

Bangs stared wildly at his questioner a moment, and, motioning him to place his ear near his lips, whispered something that was not heard by the rest of the spectators. Then, with a hollow laugh, he cried out, "Ha, ha! Now I am even with you, Ned! If my fun is to be spoiled, yours shall be too. Oh!"

A deep, tremulous groan succeeded this exclamation, and, after a violent paroxysm, the drunkard, in tones of anguish, ejaculated, "Blasted be the hand that brewed that last draught! Accursed be those whose example has made me the fiend I am! Can it be that I was once a little child! Yes, I remember it well; and the old poplar-trees, and the haymow, and the schoolhouse on the hill! Why madden me with these things! Am I not tortured enough already? No! they are coming! I feel their hot breath! Not yet! not yet! Ah! save me! save me!"

The conjurations of a violated conscience seemed to glare like spectres into his soul. He started wildly from the couch on which he had been laid. Not even the strength of four men could restrain him. He staggered, with frantic horror in his looks, across the floor, as if escaping from some terrible pursuer, tossed his arms fiercely in the air, and fell dead.

"What a lesson to evil-doers is this!" said an old man who was present.

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"I will sign the Temperance pledge this very night!" murmured a youth who had taken a glass of brandy and water an hour or two before.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Maverick, "I beg you to accompany me, without delay, to a house indicated to me by the dying man, where, from some words that he dropped, I fear there is an innocent girl in durance."

"We will all follow you!" said the persons present.

Maverick at once led the way to the abode of Mrs. Blazonby. The timely consequence of his visit has been already shown.

Shortly after the party had burst into the room where Ruth stood with her persecutor, Monsieur Mallet arrived, overwhelmed with indignation at the trick that had been played upon him. No such person as Von Steinbach could be found! But when the good Frenchman was apprized of the extent of the danger in which his little pupil had been, and into which he himself had been unwittingly made the instrument of drawing her, his Gallic fury knew no bounds. It seemed as if he would chaw up Mr. Edward Dangleton into very small pieces. As for Mrs. Blazonby, it was found that she and every one of the inmates of her house had decamped by the back door at the moment of the first alarm.

There was a question among Ruth's rescuers as to what course should be taken with regard to Mr. Dangleton. The ends of justice seemed to demand his arrest; but, as Ruth could not swear that he had done anything more than use violent and menacing language, he was, at her solicitation, permitted to depart in peace.

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A carriage was now ordered, and Ruth and the Frenchman, accompanied by Doctor Remington and Mr. Maverick, drove to the lodgings of the former. The doctor was surprised at finding Ruth's brother in his young friend Arthur. He blamed him a little, however, for not sending for him to prescribe in his sickness. Arthur vindicated himself by maintaining that Ruth's nursing was the best of medicines—not that he meant any disrespect to the apothecaries. The doctor replied by laughing, and admitting that Arthur was more than half right.

While the gentlemen were conversing with May and the boys, Ruth was called to the door to see Mrs. Bangs, who handed her a file of papers tied with red tape. Calvin, she said, in repairing the desk, had discovered a false bottom, between which and the lower one the package had been found.

Ruth's thoughts immediately recurred to the dying moments of her father, and to his ineffectual efforts to communicate some information to her in regard to the position of papers relating to her mother's family. She eagerly glanced at the papers in her hand, and discovered that the conjecture which had arisen in her mind was correct. Her mother's marriage certificate, letters addressed to old Mr. Gordon and returned, a register of the dates of the children's births, and several other important documents, were found in the parcel. Clasping them tightly to her bosom, Ruth went into the chamber of her brothers.

"What have you there, Ruth?" asked Arthur.

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"The papers for which we hunted so long just before leaving our old lodgings," she replied.

"And do they tell who grandfather was?" cried Frank.

"Yes. His name was Frederic Stanhope Gordon, and his residence, Philadelphia."

"What!" exclaimed Maverick. "Are you, indeed, the descendants of that man?"

"So it would seem from this certificate and these letters," said Ruth.

"Then it was to compel you into a marriage with him that young Dangleton inveigled you into that house?"

"That seemed to be his principal anxiety."

"Are you at all aware of the consequences of this discovery?"

"I am only aware that it may make known to us kindred who are or have been wealthy. Perhaps we would better have remained in ignorance of their names."

"Your grandfather and his children are all dead, and you are the lawful heirs to his estate!" cried Maverick.

"Good!" exclaimed Frank, starting up, quite forgetful of his bruised leg. "How much is it? Will my share be enough to let me buy a pony and keep him?"

"This is a discovery indeed!" said Doctor Remington.

"And shall I have enough, Ruth, from my share, to make Lucy Marvell a present of a new gown?" asked May.

Ruth smiled, and replied that she hoped the

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estate would not be materially diminished by such a piece of extravagance.

"There is a probability, my young friends," said Maverick, "that this development will place you all in a situation, not of competence merely, but of wealth. I am a lawyer, Ruth, and if you wish it, I will at once enter upon the investigation of your claims. Shall I take these papers with me?"

"Do so," replied Ruth, "for they would hardly be safe here. Locks and bolts do not seem to protect us against depredations."

"I will call upon you some time to-morrow," continued Mr. Maverick, "and let you know the result of my inquiries. In the mean while, Ruth, let me leave this purse with you. Nay, do not hesitate to take it. The money is advanced upon good security. There is not a lawyer in the city who would not advance you, if he had it, ten thousand times as much, upon grounds as promising. So good-night! and pleasant slumbers to you all!"

Doctor Remington and the young lawyer took their leave. Monsieur Mallet, not understanding much of the English language, did not become apprized that evening of the prospective change in the fortunes of his pupil, or, in spite of the lateness of the hour, he would have insisted on extemporizing some incomprehensible *fantasia* in honour of the felicitous event.

Ruth reserved the story of her day's adventures for some occasion when the children might be less excited. They could at present talk of nothing but plans for the future, in the event of

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the fulfilment of the expectations which Mr. Maverick had raised.

"For my part," said Arthur, "I shall spend my portion in going to College."

"Wouldn't it be first-rate if I could have a pony of my own?" asked Frank.

"I hope you will be able to throw away that ugly old hat, now, Frank."

"I would rather own it than the best hat Leary can show!" said Frank, with warmth. "When it can't be worn any longer, I'll have a glass case made to keep it in."

"It is late, dear ones," interrupted Ruth. "I think we would better all retire to our beds. Little May's eyes are already drooping. But first let us thank our heavenly Father for his care."

Ruth's cheeks were yet flushed with the excitement of the day. Kneeling, she remained silent for a few moments till her thoughts were collected, and then, in low, earnest tones, uttered a brief and simple prayer. She acknowledged the providential care which had sustained them through the trials of adversity, and prayed that, should their worldly fortunes assume a more prosperous aspect, the same gracious protection might be vouchsafed; that they might be saved from all vainglory and pride; from idleness, selfishness, sensuality, and avarice. "Rather let us remain in penury, O heavenly Father!" she cried, "than permit the fascinations of wealth and power to sway us so that we are drawn one step from the path that leadeth unto thee!"

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She ceased, and the eyes of all the children were soon fast locked in sleep.

The news of the death of Bangs did not reach his family till the next day; for neither Ruth nor her visiters had dreamed of his identity with the drunken coachman. Although intemperance had made him a burden and a curse to himself and his family, yet their tears fell profusely on hearing of his fearful end. In his trunk were found the engravings and drawings which had been stolen from Ruth, and she returned them to their lawful owner, having now no farther occasion to prosecute her ingenious art for a subsistence.

The mists were fast rolling away from the track through which the leaky and weather-beaten little shallop which bore the young Lovedays and their worldly fortunes had been moving. A fair and serene haven, glittering in the sunshine, was now in view.

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CHAPTER XVI.

CHANGE AND NO CHANGE.

EIGHTEEN months have passed since Calvin's discovery of the important papers in the old desk. What is now the situation of the orphans?

Do you see that plain but elegant structure of granite in La Grange Place? There is nothing ambitious either in its dimensions or its adornments; nothing about it to attract the eye which seeks for imposing architectural effects. But the first time I ever gazed upon its simple proportions, I thought to myself, "That must be a happy home!"

On a cold and stormy evening in December, just as the street-lamps had been lighted, a grave, elderly-looking man-servant came to the front windows and closed the shutters. Such obstacles, however, shall not prevent us from spying out the interior with our privileged eyes.

It is a room with folding-doors, which are at present closed. The furniture is rather light than massive. The carpet resembles as much as possible an enamelled garden-plat—leaves and wreaths of a light green colour being interspersed with tulips and flowers of a lively hue upon a slatish ground. It is soft and thick

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to the foot, and I should guess that some Turkish loom had laboured long in its fabrication. The walls are of a light tinge, but not so light as to mar the effect of the fine landscape paintings which are hung around them. The curtains, which hide the windows, and depend to the floor, are of muslin, faced with a straw-coloured figured satin. The cornices of the walls are gilt. The fireplace is of a pure cream-like marble, the mantelpiece being supported by pillars composed of carved figures on pedestals. One of them is Hope with her anchor, the other a beautiful emblematic figure of Charity. A cheerful wood fire is blazing on the marble hearth.

Around the centre-table, which is wholly of white marble, and upon which stands a lighted astral lamp and a vase of hothouse flowers, are four beings in the prime of youth, two of them boys and two of the other sex. The eldest, a girl, apparently about seventeen, sits in an arm-chair, reading. The boys appear to be studying their lessons, and the younger girl is arranging some music to be bound. A large mirror, extending from the wall to the floor in the space between the windows, reflects them all, and seems to love the reflection.

"The air is overheated. John has built up too much fire," said the elder girl, laying down her book.

Yes, dear reader, it is Ruth! Time has touched her lightly since we saw her last, or touched her only to beautify. Her hair, instead of being closely tied up behind in convenient

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snugness, as of old, gushes in black glossy ringlets down her white neck. Her cheeks are no longer wan, and her delicately-moulded limbs rest unconstrainedly within their tasteful, uncorseted attire. She wears no jewels save those which Nature has showered upon her; and Art may thank her that she does not mortify him by the contrast of his tinsel gifts. To this assertion there is, however, a single exception. A slender gold chain hangs about her neck, and attached to it is a pencil-case, which she holds in her hand. A pencil-case is of service sometimes in reading, when we wish to mark favourite passages. But why, my dear Ruth—why, in the name of all that is fashionable, do you carry one of silver, when you know that you can afford one curiously wrought of gold, and set around with diamonds?

Truly there is no accounting for the freaks which young girls sometimes take into their heads.

"Do me the favour, Frank, to open the folding-doors, and let in a little fresh air," says Ruth, whose prejudices in behalf of that luxury seem as strong as ever.

Frank does as he is requested, and, though the other room is not lighted, I can plainly see, through the opposite windows, that the broad piazza before them has been converted into a conservatory, and is filled with tiers upon tiers of hothouse plants. And, by-the-way, a gossiping neighbour tells me that Ruth rather prides herself upon her taste in arranging bouquets, if pride be the proper word to signify the gentle

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pleasure which she derives from the employment.

"Now let me hear you play the air from Norma, May," says Ruth, carelessly taking up the newspaper of the evening.

May flings back her yellow curls, and turns over the leaves of one of the numerous music-books under the piano.

But what has so suddenly startled Ruth? She has read in the newspaper the following brief advertisement: "Mr. Franklin Stanford, portrait-painter, respectfully informs the public that he has resumed the practice of his art at his old rooms in Vesey-street."

Ruth rings the bell, and the grave, elderly-looking servant already alluded to makes his appearance.

"John, you will please have the carriage at the door as soon as possible."

"The carriage!"

"Yes. You seem surprised."

"It is a dark, disagreeable night, Miss Ruth; and it is such an unusual thing for you to go out in the evening!"

"I know it, John; but it is an unusual inducement which draws me out now. So be quick with the carriage. But, before you go, tell Bridget to make a fire in the closed chamber that looks towards the south; to air the room, and put fresh sheets on the bed."

"Yes, Miss Ruth, it shall be done, and the carriage at the door in ten minutes."

John was an Englishman, who had been a servant from his childhood to his fiftieth year in

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the family of a wealthy English banker. The banker shot himself one day, in consequence of some heavy losses, by which he was reduced to penury; and John expended the little property he had laid up for himself in providing for his master's destitute children. The recipients of his bounty proved ungrateful, and John, in the hope of finding employment, sailed in one of the first steam-ships for the United States. In New-York, by one of those coincidences which are frequently brought about in this new and changing country, he met an old female acquaintance, for whom he had felt a particular regard some thirty years before. Adverse circumstances had prevented their union; but each had always recollected the other with affection, and each had remained single, perhaps, for the other's sake. At any rate, many months had not passed after their encounter in America, before Miss Bridget Wakely became Mrs. John Murray. They had both been strongly recommended to Ruth for servants; and I have been always suspicious that she had some hand in bringing them together in the bonds of matrimony. Mrs. Murray was taken into the family as a sort of sub-housekeeper; and a most notable one she was! Wo to the chambermaid who suffered a speck of dust to be seen in any of the rooms committed to her care! Unless specially pardoned by Ruth, which, except in flagrant instances, generally was the case, she had to "pack up and be off," as Mrs. John would express it, "quick as she could say Jack Robinson."

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With such domestic assistants, Ruth did not find the management of her little household at all difficult. Mrs. Murray undertook the supply of the table, and she discharged the task in a manner suited to the simple tastes of the children. John attended to all the out-door affairs of the establishment, and was, in fact, coachman, groom, and steward, all in one. As both he and his wife were scrupulously honest, Ruth considered herself singularly fortunate in having them in her employment. Their attachment to her was unbounded, and was only equalled by their respect for her discretion and goodness.

While I have been indulging in these details, the coach has arrived. Ruth requests Arthur to put on his cloak and accompany her. In two minutes, under John's steady guidance, they are skimming along the smooth wooden pavement with which a patch of the upper part of Broadway is floored.

We will stride a little before them, and enter the painter's room. It is the same to which I introduced the reader in the first chapter of this work. The alterations are trifling, which have been made in it since the date of that occasion. A different painting is on the easel. An old sofa-bedstead stands behind a screen. There is no fire in the grate, although the night is chilly.

Stanford is sitting in much the same posture that we found him in at our first meeting. Two years, however, have wrought a sad change in his appearance. His cheeks are pale and sunken. His copious, bushy hair is here and there

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streaked with gray. The cheerful smile, which once played about his lips and beamed from his eyes, is gone. Care and sickness have left their marks upon his face.

Upon a table near him lies an unfinished letter, in his own hand-writing. It is addressed to his mother. As it may throw some light upon his recent history, I hope it will not be deemed impertinent in me to glance over it, and quote some few passages:

"I had not been in Paris three weeks, when the gentleman with whom the contract for copying pictures had been made, died, and I was left to provide for myself. For months I lived upon an incredibly small sum, frequenting the galleries, and studying the choicest works of the great masters.

"The following summer I travelled on foot into Italy, and passed some time in Florence and in Rome. In the latter place I was ill some months, through exposure to the malaria, and was obliged to abstain from the practice of my art.

"Feeble and impoverished, I arrived in Leghorn about four months since. There I painted the portraits of some American sea-captains, and finally took passage for New-York. Our voyage was long and tedious. A malady, called the ship-fever, broke out among the poor passengers in the steerage. I attended rather too incautiously upon the sick, and contracted the disease. When we reached the Quarantine Ground at Staten Island, I was obliged to place myself under the charge of the resident physi-

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cian of the port. After weeks of severe illness I was able to be removed to the city, where I re-engaged my old rooms in Vesey-street, and told the public I was ready to paint their portraits.

"Such has been and is the depression in all branches of business, however, that I have hardly succeeded in earning my salt. Among those who have the ability to pay for good paintings, there is, moreover, an insensibility to the true and beautiful in art, which leads them to apply the same rules of calculation to a painting that they would to a bale of cotton or a load of wood. Let the canvass be large enough, lay on any quantity of gaudy colours, and they are content. Now I can never deal with such people. I cannot bear to let a crude, unfinished production go from my easel. Study and labour must be expended on it, even though I might earn the scanty remuneration awarded to it with an expenditure of a twentieth part of that study and labour.

"After a dispassionate consideration of all these circumstances, I have resolved, my dear mother, to abandon my art and return to my native village, where, in agricultural pursuits, I may possibly renovate my shattered constitution. Although, after all my brave hopes, and all the prognostications of my too sanguine and partial friends, in whose rustic estimation I was years ago a Sir Benjamin West, I shall come back almost as attenuated in person as in purse, yet I do not fear but that I shall be welcome to your humble roof.

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"I have been fearing to-night that symptoms of a relapse in my fever had appeared—so weak and hot am I, although, for economy's sake, I am sitting without a fire, with my old cloak about me. By morning, perhaps—"

Here the manuscript abruptly ends.

"Yes!" says Stanford, "I must bid farewell to my art—my beautiful art—in which I once dreamed I should win distinction. Ay! I remember sitting in this very room one cold, cheerless evening, some two years since, and hewing out of hope's inexhaustible quarries gorgeous fabrics—magnificent palaces for the future! Where are they now? Faded—faded! Yes, I well remember that night. It was dark and wet like this; and, in returning to my lodgings, I met a little girl in the street asking charity. Ruth—ay, that was her name—Ruth Loveday! Poor Ruth! Where art thou now, with thy little family? I have sought thee in the abode where I left thee. It was half consumed by a recent fire. None of the dwellers near could tell me of thy whereabout. God grant that the rude world has used thee well!"

As Stanford finishes his soliloquy, he puts both hands to his forehead as if to subdue a sudden pain.

"If that fever comes back, I fear my career in this world will soon be brought to a conclusion!" says he.

There is a noise of carriage-wheels before the street-door. It does not excite his attention, for little dreams he that there are human beings near, at that time of the day, eager to

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hear of his welfare. Footsteps approach the door of his room; a knock is heard and answered; and Ruth and Arthur enter.

"Mr. Stanford!"

"By whom have I the honour of being accosted?" asks the painter, in surprise.

"By one who owes you more than she can easily repay."

"Can it be? Is it Ruth? Is it Arthur?"

"Yes, Mr. Stanford, you have guessed aright."

The painter, obeying his first impulse, kisses Ruth, and shakes hands with Arthur. So sudden are his movements, that our young lady does not anticipate, and, of course, cannot prevent, the act. He sinks into his chair with an appearance of fatigue.

"You have been well, I hope, dear Mr. Stanford?"

"Nay, Ruth; were there more than one candle in the room, you need not have asked the question. I have been very ill, and am even now feverish and weak. But you—you, my child, if my eyes do not deceive me—you *have* been, and *are* well? And how is little blue-eyed May? And how is Frank?"

"Well—both of them! You shall see them this very night."

"Not to-night, I fear. I am too unwell to quit my room."

"Rather say, too unwell to remain in it, chilly and desolate as it is!"

"Do you propose that I shall not return to it this evening?"

"Certainly. My carriage is at the door. My

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house is not far distant. The best chamber in it has been long kept sacred for you."

"Carriage! House!"

"Yes, my dear friend. You remember the documents relating to my mother's family, for which we searched long in vain? They were found at last. In one word, we have inherited a large estate, and this is the first moment that I have felt a thrill of unalloyed joy because of the inheritance; for I now have the means of testifying my gratitude, my—regard. So do not attempt to exhaust yourself by words. It is my turn now to play the nurse. Alas! you are quite weak! Arthur, take hold of his other arm, and, with me, aid him to rise. So! Now let me lift the cloak around your shoulders. The dear cloak! It once sheltered me—it did—when my limbs were half frozen. Cheerily! We shall soon reach the carriage. Here are the stairs. Do not fear a fall. We are stronger than you think for. One step more. We are at the foot. The street-door is open. A few paces more, and we are at the carriage. Slowly and surely! So! The steps are down. Now—gently, Arthur. Is he seated? Then make room for me. Now drive carefully home, John."

"Yes, Miss Ruth."

John puts up the steps, closes the door, and, mounting the coach-box, guides homeward his well-trained horses.

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOUBLE RESTORATION.

STANFORD'S illness proved more serious than he had anticipated. During a whole week it seemed as if the vital forces might be destroyed by a breath. The most skilful physicians were almost hourly in attendance; but the soft hand and tender voice of affection did more for the invalid than drugs. Ruth hardly allowed herself the degree of sleep essential to her own health. She was by his bedside by day and by night, administering his potions, and suggesting a thousand little comforts.

The recuperative energies of a sound constitution at length began to rally, and assert their dominion over a disease foreign to their nature. The patient was convalescent. With what tears of joy did Ruth receive the announcement from her trusty friend, Doctor Remington!

Stanford could now sit up the greater part of the day, and walk in his room. Yet still would Ruth hover around him, watch his restoration, and protest against any undue exertion on his part. She ordered her harp to be carried into his room, and there, through delightful hours, would she sit, playing enthralling melodies, and singing sweet, cheerful songs. At times she would read to him some light, engaging book,

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every page of which seemed strewed with smiles, and the sparkling fancies of which came radiant with new charms from her tongue. But it was in narrating the incidents that had befallen her and her brothers after Stanford's departure that she most interested her hearer. As she recounted her struggles and successes, the unseen persecutions to which she had been subjected, her temptations and triumphs, the painter's breast would heave with emotion, and he would turn away his eyes from the fair face before him as from a bright, alluring danger.

The weeks and months which Ruth had devoted to attendance upon her invalid guest had flown rapidly by to both. During that time she had not been wholly free from the calls and inquisitive supervision of acquaintances and friends. Her fortune, her beauty and discretion, her singularly independent position, all contributed to render her an object of attention and interest to the fashionable and designing.

Ruth had hitherto avoided gay society, not that it was altogether distasteful, but because she apprehended it would interfere with studies and pursuits which would contribute to her intellectual advancement. She was also, as yet, too young, in her own estimation, to find her proper sphere in a ballroom; and, were there not this objection, the fact that she had only Arthur, who was still a boy, for a protector in her visits, was enough to induce her to refuse all persuasions to mingle in society. Occasionally she was entrapped by some adroit mother into visiting, when she would find, to her sur-

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prise, a large party assembled, and herself the principal object of notice. At these times, every notable young man would of course seek an introduction, and afterward, presuming upon the accident, would call upon her at her house. But John's stereotyped answer was, "Miss Ruth does not see company;" and the baffled visiters would leave their cards and depart.

One of the most annoying results of these accidents soon displayed itself. Ruth could not enter Broadway without being joined by some one of these *beaux* of a moment. In self-defence, she at length rarely went out on foot; and then she was relieved of the persecutions of the "dandies," except when they chanced to waylay her as she was stepping from her carriage into Stewart's to make a purchase.

Spring had come ere the invalid was strong enough to quit his room. The soft, restorative airs of May seemed to hasten his convalescence; and one bright, balmy morning, after returning from a ride with Ruth, he entered the parlour with her. The windows were open, and the odour from the blossoming trees in the yard was sweet and fragrant.

"You are weary?" said Ruth, as she saw Stanford sink into a chair, and lean his brow upon his hand.

"Not weary, but thoughtful," returned he.

"And is not the thought a glad one?"

"A most unwelcome one—for it was the thought of leaving you."

"But why—what necessity—why should you go?" asked Ruth, hurriedly, while the blood vanished from her cheeks.

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"Have I not taxed your gratitude sufficiently?"

"Taxed! Gratitude! Words most unkind! As if gratitude merely—"

"Ah! Ruth, you have now so overweighed the balance of that debt in your favour, that you have made me bankrupt."

"Have you not other motives that influence you in conceiving the idea of departure?"

"I have."

"May I not ask what they are?"

"It would be ungenerous in me to tell you."

"That is impossible. I pray you, inform me why it is you cherish the wish."

"Can you not imagine?"

"I cannot."

"It is, Ruth, for this good and sufficient reason: a time for parting *must* come, sooner or later."

"And why?"

"Because I have already subjected you to the remarks and inquiries of gossiping neighbours by my presence here."

"What do I care for gossiping neighbours?"

"You are too generous and pure, I well know, to be affected by the breath of detraction under such circumstances; but that is no cause why I should not preserve you from it, if I can, especially when it is to be done by my absence."

"Are these your only inducements for going?"

"There is one more, which I would rather not mention."

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"I claim the privilege of asking it."

"The longer I stay with you, Ruth, the more appalling to my heart will be the prospect of separation. I first met you as a child—a sweet and lovely one, but still a child. The disproportion of our years forbade the awakening of any other sentiment in my breast than one of paternal affection. I loved you as I might love a daughter—as I now love your little sister. Two years intervene. I return, and find you a woman in intellect and soul, with a person which all the graces seem to have had a share in moulding. What has been the consequence? I have felt, and yet feel in your society, as I never felt before towards any one of your sex. There is peril in such a feeling, Ruth—a peril from which I must flee."

"Then whither thou fleest I will flee, and where thou lodgest I will lodge!"

Why do you start so, Stanford? The idea was almost incomprehensible, and the joy too bewildering. It was not till Ruth exhibited the treasured pencil-case, and told him what a talisman it had been to her, that he could absolutely realize that she was in earnest. With an exclamation of—

My maiden aunt suggests that I would better drop the curtain upon the scene that ensued. As the old lady is a pretty large holder of real estate in Fourteenth-street, I think, upon the whole, that it will be for my interest to comply with her prejudices in this instance.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

LAST SCENE OF ALL.

Before I finally dismiss the personages of my little drama, let me indulge the delusion that my audience, by an encouraging round of applause, have "called them out" to be marshalled yet once again in their sight.

It must have been apparent to my readers, from the turn things were taking at the close of my last chapter, that Ruth and Stanford have been worthily provided for, long before this work reaches the public eye. Let us hope that in their prosperity they will lose none of those generous traits that distinguished them while they were struggling with worldly ills and privations; but that their union, in enhancing their joys, may also enhance their virtues.

Arthur Loveday is at present engaged in his collegiate studies, after the completion of which he looks forward to entering upon the study of medicine. Frank is still at school. He has not lost his old predilections for a mercantile life. Over the mantelpiece in his chamber is a glass case, enclosing the memorable hat, which, in his days of poverty, was wont to expose him to so much persecution and remark. He has liberally assisted many of his old associates in procuring occupations by which they can gain a

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subsistence. He owns a "first-rate" pony, and is in the habit of taking a ride on horseback every morning before breakfast.

As for our friend May—sunny, smiling little May—she is fast blooming into girlhood. Long since has she made the coveted present to her friend Lucy Marvell; and not *one* present merely, but more than I can count.

The Bangs family have been taken under the especial protection of Ruth, who has provided for them all in the handsomest manner, placing the boys in situations where, with industry and perseverance, they can aspire to the most honourable stations in the community.

I must not forget our old acquaintance, Mr. Bibb. Ruth has set him up in business, and he is now fatter, more jocose, and prosperous than ever, notwithstanding the irreparable loss he has sustained in the death of Mrs. Bibb. That notable lady burst a bloodvessel not long since while scolding a book-pedler, who had trodden with muddy feet on her best carpet—a new-year's gift from Frank Loveday. It is still the old grocer's delight to collect the children of the neighbourhood about him, and feast them with candy and raisins—a pastime which he can now indulge in unrebuked. He has made one good resolve for the future: never to meddle again in affairs of the heart, nor to try his talents at match-making.

A singular fate has befallen Mr. Edward Dangleton. Overcome by a terrific sense of his past delinquencies and transgressions, his mind seems to have rebounded from its vicious apathy

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into the extreme of fanaticism. He is now a strolling preacher, and he finds many hearers among the poorer classes of society, with whom his franticly fervid appeals and sulphurous exhortations are popular and effectual. That he is sincere, no one can listen to him and doubt; but in his eyes, the Supreme Being is a penal God of terror, and vindictiveness, and hoarded wrath, not a Father of infinite benignity, mercy, justice, and love, as he manifests himself to us in his works. And thus does poor human frailty make for itself and for the world a Deity, investing him with attributes which can have no existence save in the depraved and affrighted imagination of the inventor!

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." What more shall we ask? Heaven must be looked for in the soul; and, as we grow in goodness, we draw nearer to God, who is infinitely good. Fallible brother! how shalt thou presume to measure the distance between me and the Divinity, or to analyze that which God and his commissioned angels can alone discern? Dost thou, who cannot explain to me the principle of life in the meanest reptile, dare to pronounce judgment against an immortal soul? Go pray for that knowledge which may enlighten thee as to the extent of thine own ignorance. Thou hast brazen, stentorian lungs, but there is a still, small, pleading voice, whose lightest whisper can drown thy noisy fulminations: it is the voice of conscience!

There is yet another of my characters who should not be forgotten in this farewell glance.

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I allude to Monsieur Mallet, the friend of Von Steinbach, the composer of—Chaos can tell what. As he sympathized with Ruth in her misfortunes, so did he bask in the sunshine of her prosperous days. Through Arthur's agency, publishers have been found for his favourite compositions, all of which are dedicated, in grandiloquent terms, to his former pupil. Rumours have reached me that one of his operas was recently put in rehearsal at the Park Theatre, but that it was hastily withdrawn on the manager's finding, to his dismay, that the piece was in twelve acts—a most unexampled instance of musical fertility!

My task is done. The little structure which my pen has raised is complete. Time may soon rend its fragile foundations, and cover it with the dust of merited oblivion; but its truths, if it contain any, shall be imperishable.

THE END.

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The style of this story exhibits great facility and experience in composition, though, for aught we learn of the author, it is his first appearance. His descriptive powers are of a high order. His characters are admirably individualized. The incidents are well arranged, and the plot well developed. The work will be read with great interest even by "older children" than those for whom it is especially designed.

From the Journal of Commerce.

Our young friends have been so wearied by books foreign to their habits and tastes, that they will appreciate a hearty and healthful domestic story, and particularly coming in a style of such eminent literary merit as distinguishes the volume before us. If you are in search of a gift for the season, we can recommend this handsome little book.

From the New-York Sun.

This promises to be the most popular juvenile book of the day, and one of the most suitable for holyday presents. It is different from any other that has come to our hands for a long time—a perfect *novel in miniature;* not a patchwork of baby's talk, and the commonplaces of the schoolbooks, but a healthy, hearty, original domestic story. We bid the author hail, and wish him speed in his generous enterprise, for the application of such superior powers of style and description to works of this character entitles him to an enviable pre-eminence among our writers.

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From the New-York Tribune.

American, and therefore entitled to our friendly consideration; but not so much on that account as because it is a credit to American literature in style, sentiment, and construction. Among the large number of juvenile tales that has appeared in this country, we know of none superior in merit to the volume before us, and few that can compare with it.

From the New-York Brother Jonathan.

This is a pleasantly-told story, simple in its style of narrative, and practical and American in its lessons. It is just the work to be bought and read, and to do good into whose hands soever it may fall.

From the National Intelligencer.

The library now publishing by the Messrs. Harper, commenced under the supervision of Hon. John C. Spencer, while Secretary of State of New-York, contains an admirable selection of useful and entertaining works, but none of higher literary merit, or better calculated for permanent popularity, than the volume before us. The style of *Wealth and Worth* is excellent, and many of its descriptions of natural scenery are sketched with exquisite grace and beauty.

From the New World.

The style is uniformly neat, chaste, and accurate—as simple and natural as that of the Vicar of Wakefield. We cannot too highly appreciate the devotion of such talents as are exhibited in this little work to this class of literature; for we are of those who would emancipate the young American mind from the blind attachment to foreign scenes and interests, which the exclusive perusal in early life of the productions of foreign writers must inevitably induce.

From the New-York Commercial Advertiser.

Many writers have succeeded in depicting life as it often appears in America, tinctured with European conventionalism, and vain attempts at European exclusiveness and display; but this writer has given us American life as it aims to be.

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From the New-Orleans Bee.

To whom we are indebted for this really beautiful little work does not appear, though it is obviously no first effort, if we can judge anything from the agreeable current of the composition, or of its artistical construction and development.

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